
**Rural Development, Agriculture, &
Natural Resources Committee**

HB 1731

Brief Description: Continuing the work of the Washington food policy forum.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregerson, Dye, Ramos, Dent, Blake, Jinkins, Peterson, Hudgins and Riccelli.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Washington Food Policy Forum (Forum) as a public-private partnership to promote a variety of goals related to Washington's food system.
- Directs the Forum to submit recommendations to the Legislature no later than October 29, 2020.

Hearing Date: 2/12/19

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

The Washington Food Policy Forum.

The Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission) convened the Washington Food Policy Forum (Forum) in response to direction and funding in the 2016 Supplemental Operating Budget. The Forum followed a previous food system roundtable established by Executive Order Number 10-02.

The Forum is composed of members appointed by the Director of the Commission, as well as four members from the Legislature.

The 2018 supplemental operating budget required the Commission to report the Forum's recommendations to the Legislature by June 30, 2019.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Food Policy Forum (Forum) is established as a public-private partnership and must develop recommendations to promote the following food system goals:

- to increase the availability of Washington-grown foods throughout the state, including by increasing direct marketing sales and consumption of Washington-grown foods;
- to expand and promote programs that bring healthy and nutritious Washington-grown foods to Washington residents, including increased public and private purchasing of Washington food products for schools, adult care programs, and other publicly funded food programs;
- to examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number of farmers for small and mid-scale farms, meet the educational needs for the next generation of farmers, and provide for the continued economic viability of Washington food production, processing, and distribution in the state;
- to reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state; and
- to identify ways to improve coordination and communication among city, county, regional, and state food policy entities and communication between these entities and state agencies.

The Forum's recommendations must consider, at a minimum, how the following can help achieve the goals of the Forum:

- increased collaboration and communication between local, state, and federal governments and agencies;
- innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage private and public market influence, such as through institutional purchasing and contracts;
- improvements to state or federal laws or regulations or funding relevant to the small and mid-scale farming interactions with the food system and food security in the state;
- improvements in state or federal program implementation relevant to small and mid-scale farming interactions with the food system and food security in the state;
- identification of additional federal, state, local, and private investments needed to accomplish the recommendations; and
- determination of definitions and descriptions of the variety of agriculture in the state utilizing farm acreage, farm business type, crop and agricultural product type, and definition of what the term "local" means in the context of food production and distribution.

In the course of developing its recommendations, the Forum:

- shall coordinate with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, and nongovernmental organizations to avoid duplication of effort;
- shall solicit public input through public hearings or informational sessions;
- may conduct research and analysis as needed within financial resources available to the Forum; and
- may form an advisory committee or committees to address issues identified by the Forum, and that are within the guidelines of the goals of the Forum, as requiring additional study or particular expertise.

The Director of the Washington State Conservation Commission (Commission) and the Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) share equally the responsibility for

appointing the members of the Forum, with a goal of ensuring a diversity of knowledge, experience, and perspectives, including, but not limited to:

- state and federal government employees, including academia;
- related nonprofit and community organizations; and
- the food industry, including food production, processing, distribution, marketing, and retail sales.

A majority of the participating members appointed by the directors must appoint an administrative chair for the Forum.

Four members of the Legislature may also serve on the Forum, one from each of the two largest caucuses in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The members of the Forum will not receive compensation, but may be reimbursed for their travel expenses.

The Commission and the WSDA must provide staff for the Forum. The Commission and the WSDA are also responsible for transmitting the Forum's recommendations to the Legislature. The Forum's recommendations must be submitted to the Legislature by October 29, 2020.

If specific funding for the Forum is not provided in the 2019 operating budget, the act is null and void.

The Forum expires on July 1, 2021.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.