

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2624

As Reported by House Committee On:
Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to the authority of the director of the department of agriculture with respect to certain examinations and examination fees.

Brief Description: Concerning the authority of the director of the department of agriculture with respect to certain examinations and examination fees.

Sponsors: Representatives Shewmake, Kretz, Blake, Dent and Lekanoff; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources: 1/24/20, 1/31/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Specifies that the Department of Agriculture (WSDA) may contract with a public or private third-party entity to administer pesticide and pest control licensing examinations, collection of examination fees, or both.
- Authorizes the WSDA to direct license applicants to pay examination license fees to the third party.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE, & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Shewmake, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chapman, Dye, Kretz, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Ramos, Schmick, Springer and Walsh.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

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.

All individuals who are licensed or who are required to be licensed as pesticide applicators, pesticide operators, structural pest inspectors, and pest control consultants must be certified through examination in the area in which they operate or consult. To be certified, a person must attain a passing score of at least 70 percent on a certification examination. Examinations are administered by the Department of Agriculture (WSDA), and the WSDA collects a fee from the applicant for each exam at an amount set in rule.

License classifications address the control of a variety of pests, including insects and diseases, pest animals in agricultural situations, aquatic pests both generally and in irrigation systems, and weeds. There are also licenses for pest control operators and structural pest inspectors.

Summary of Bill:

The Director of the Department of Agriculture (WSDA) may contract with a public or private third party to administer examinations related to pesticide and pest control licensing, collection of examination fees, or both. Examinations offered by a third party must be the same as would be offered by the WSDA. The WSDA may direct applicants to pay the fees to the third party administering the examination in accordance with WSDA rules governing third-party examinations and fees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Currently, the examination structure is outdated. All of the exams are on paper and offered at only a few locations throughout the state. The Department of Agriculture (WSDA) would like the ability to work with other agencies or third parties to offer testing at more facilities, and offer testing electronically. There can be months between when a person is hired and when they receive their certification exam results. Washington would be the twentieth state to offer e-testing. Most field technicians are seasonal, which makes the gap between testing and receiving results problematic. It is better for all citizens if pesticide applicators are licensed. Licensed applicators pay more attention to what they are doing and must document their activities on each site. The antiquated testing process carries health and safety risks with regard to pest control. The ability to test locally will bring staff stress levels down and reduce travel times and cars on the roads. Some people have been able to test in Oregon and transfer their certification to Washington, but it would be better to have the testing fee go to Washington instead of Oregon. The pest control industry has changed, but the testing has not. Payment by credit card should be allowed.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Shewmake, prime sponsor; Kelly McLain, Department of Agriculture; Dana Coggon, Kitsap Noxious Weed Control; Anthony Wurst, Dominion Pest Control; Billy Oleson, National Pest Management Association; and Luke Rambo, Rambo Total Pest Control.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.