

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## 2SSB 5643

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### As Reported by House Committee On:

Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources

**Title:** An act relating to supporting youth development.

**Brief Description:** Supporting youth development.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Schoesler, Braun, Dozier, Rivers, Short, Wagoner and Wellman).

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/22/22, 2/23/22 [DP].

#### Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Provides that certain organizations representing the social and economic interests of farm and ranch families at the local, state, and national levels may sponsor youth development programs to promote participation in agricultural fairs, youth shows, and exhibitions.
- States that it is in the public interest to support participation in youth development programs and the Legislature will appropriate funds to fulfill the enrollment fees owed to the programs by participants.

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Chapman, Chair; Shewmake, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fitzgibbon, Klicker, Kloba, Kretz, Lekanoff, McEntire, Morgan, Orcutt, Ramos, Schmick and Springer.

**Staff:** Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

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

## **Background:**

### Agricultural Fairs.

Agricultural fairs are fairs or exhibitions intended to promote agriculture by including, among other things, a balanced variety of exhibits of livestock and agricultural products.

Agricultural fairs are divided into four categories:

- area fairs, which are organized to serve an area larger than one county;
- county and district fairs, which are organized to serve the interests of certain single counties;
- community fairs, which are organized primarily to serve a smaller area than an area fair or county fair; and
- youth shows and fairs, which serve three or more counties, educate and train rural youth, and are approved by Washington State University or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

### Fair Fund.

For fiscal years 2022 and 2023, the State Treasurer must transfer \$2.75 million from the State General Fund into the Fair Fund administered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Ninety-five percent of all allocations from the Fair Fund must be distributed to agricultural fairs based on a merit rating system set up by the Director of the WSDA. This merit rating must take into account certain factors, including:

- area and population served, attendance, gate receipts, and community support;
- open or youth participation and the number and type of exhibits;
- evidence of successful achievement of the aims and purposes of the fair; and
- extent of improvements made to grounds and facilities from year to year and the overall condition and appearance of grounds and facilities.

Any state allocations must be made only as a reimbursement for operating expenses incurred by the fairs. The WSDA may use up to 10 percent for special assistance to any participating fair and may use the remaining 5 percent for expenses, including fair commission expenses.

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## **Summary of Bill:**

Voluntary, grassroots organizations representing the social and economic interests of farm and ranch families at the local, state, and national levels may sponsor youth development programs to promote participation in agricultural fairs; youth shows; and exhibitions and education in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and robotics as well as animal husbandry and agricultural education.

Youth development programs are defined as programs designed to educate youth in a

variety of topics including agriculture, animal husbandry, food preservation, civic engagement, science, technology, and engineering, including youth development programs under the Washington State University Cooperative Extension and the Washington Future Farmers of America Association (Washington FFA). Youth development programs must incorporate civics, civil society, and participation in government into their programming.

It is in the public interest to support participation in youth development programs, including youth development programs sponsored by voluntary, grassroots organizations, youth development programs under Washington State University Cooperative Extension, and membership in the Washington FFA.

The Legislature will appropriate funds to fulfill the enrollment fees owed to the programs by participants. To receive appropriated funds, a program must submit a roster of enrolled youth to the WSDA after the enrollment period to receive a reimbursement of all enrollment fees. Any other fees submitted for reimbursement must be done before the end of the fiscal year. The Director of the WSDA may authorize expenditures from the Fair Fund, subject to the availability of appropriations for this specific purpose and for reimbursing the enrollment fees owed to the youth development programs. Youth development programs are not subject to the same requirements to be eligible to receive state allocations as agricultural fairs.

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**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) Kids have been required to pay fees to participate in programs like 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) for a long time. Whether they raise cows or participate in a robotics club, kids should have the opportunity to participate in these programs. Enrollment is currently down, but this is a time when the state should be encouraging participation. Some counties are not served by Cooperative Extension programs like 4-H. This bill has been well-worked in the Senate. Fairs are Washington's largest classroom, and the Washington State Fairs Association wants to ensure that opportunities to learn outside the classroom are afforded to as many kids as possible. While these programs provide important agricultural education, skills learned through 4-H and FFA can also be applied in related fields such as science and technology. Organizations such as 4-H and FFA also are finding new ways to connect with career opportunities in these fields. This bill will help remove financial barriers to participating in these organizations.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Mark Schoesler, prime sponsor; Andrea Thayer, Washington State Fairs Association; and Danyelle Cavadini, Washington Future Farmers of America Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.