

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5812

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

**Title:** An act relating to including Benton county as a county qualifying for the farm internship program.

**Brief Description:** Including Benton county as a county qualifying for the farm internship program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Warnick, Stanford, Brown and Schoesler.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/16/22, 2/22/22 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Adds Benton County to the list of counties in which the Department of Labor and Industries is authorized to operate the farm internship pilot program.

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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:** Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

**Background:**

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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.*

Farm Internship Program.

Legislation enacted in 2010 directed the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to establish a farm internship pilot project. Eligible farms were those located in Skagit County or San Juan County. This pilot project expired on December 31, 2011.

Legislation enacted in 2014 reauthorized the pilot project for the following counties: Chelan, Grant, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lincoln, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom, and Yakima. In 2017 legislation reauthorized the pilot project through December 31, 2019, and added the following counties: Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, and Walla Walla. The pilot project expired December 31, 2019, and, in 2020, the Legislature directed L&I to reestablish the pilot project. The current pilot project expires on December 31, 2024.

Under the pilot project, qualified small farms are allowed to employ up to three farm interns at any time, working under special certificates. Farms seeking to employ interns must apply for special certificates issued by L&I and sign agreements with the interns setting forth specified information. The special certificate must specify its terms and conditions, including the duration of the internship; the wage rate, if any; and any room, board, stipends, or other remuneration.

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**Summary of Bill:**

Benton County is added to the list of counties in which L&I is authorized to operate the farm internship pilot program.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) It would be good to see the farm internship pilot project in all counties; for example, there is farming in King County. The pilot project is currently not available in Benton County, and there is a farm in Benton County that is interested in participating in the pilot project. The state needs more farmers, and there is a need to have farm internships so people can learn about planting, wildlife management, and how to best manage farms. The farm internship pilot project would be a great addition to Benton County.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Judy Warnick, prime sponsor.

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