
HOUSE BILL 1395

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Morgan, Ramos, Ormsby, Valdez, Kloba, Simmons, Ortiz-Self, Shewmake, Ramel, Paul, Fitzgibbon, J. Johnson, Sells, Ryu, Peterson, Slatter, Pollet, Berg, Macri, Gregerson, Eslick, Callan, and Harris-Talley

Read first time 01/27/21. Referred to Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to ensuring equity in farming; adding a new
2 chapter to Title 15 RCW; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the
5 agricultural industry is a significant part of the culture and
6 economy of Washington. Even so, according to the 2017 census of
7 agriculture prepared by the United States department of agriculture,
8 farmers from historically underrepresented groups make up only a
9 small fraction of total farmers. For example, less than 2,000
10 producers out of 63,298 total, or about three percent, are from
11 American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, and
12 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. Additionally, under
13 3,000 producers report to be of Latin, Hispanic, or Spanish origin.

14 (2) The legislature further recognizes systemic barriers for
15 historically underrepresented groups have kept these groups from
16 accessing opportunities in agriculture. It is critical to provide
17 opportunities to enter and remain in the agricultural industry to
18 people who are underrepresented in agriculture.

19 (3) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to ensure
20 opportunities for historically underrepresented groups to enter and
21 remain in the farming industry. Further, it is the intent of the

1 legislature to ensure that farmers and ranchers from historically
2 underrepresented groups are aware of and have equitable access to
3 federal and state resources available to help them thrive.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
5 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
6 otherwise.

7 (1) "Farming and ranching" means engaging in activities
8 associated with agriculture, including growing, producing, or raising
9 commodities such as livestock, fruit, vegetables, or grains. Farming
10 and ranching may be conducted on land owned, leased, or otherwise
11 lawfully accessed by the farmer or rancher through either a formal or
12 informal agreement.

13 (2) "Historically underrepresented farmer or rancher" means a
14 farmer or rancher who is a member of a historically underrepresented
15 group of people.

16 (3) "Historically underrepresented group" means a group of people
17 whose members have not been represented in farming or ranching due to
18 prejudice based on race or ethnicity. These groups include all of the
19 following:

- 20 (a) Black/African Americans;
- 21 (b) Native Americans and Alaska Natives;
- 22 (c) Latin Americans and Hispanics;
- 23 (d) Asian Americans;
- 24 (e) Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

25 (4) "Urbanized area," as used by the United States census bureau,
26 means a geographic area with a population of at least 50,000 people.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The department shall ensure the
28 inclusion of historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers,
29 including historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers in
30 urbanized areas, in the development, implementation, and enforcement
31 of food and agriculture laws, rules, regulations, policies, and
32 programs.

33 (2) The department shall:

- 34 (a) Consult with the office of equity, the conservation
35 commission, the department of ecology, the department of natural
36 resources, the department of commerce, the department of health, the
37 food policy forum, historically underrepresented farmers and
38 ranchers, and organizations that represent historically

1 underrepresented farmers and ranchers, on opportunities for
2 historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers, and to coordinate
3 state programs;

4 (b) Disseminate information regarding opportunities for
5 historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers provided by
6 federal government agencies including, but not limited to, the:

7 (i) United States department of agriculture;

8 (ii) United States environmental protection agency;

9 (iii) General accounting office; and

10 (iv) Office of management and budget;

11 (c) Work with the office of equity to evaluate boards,
12 committees, commissions, and advisory panels created under this title
13 and Titles 16 and 17 RCW for inclusion of and outreach to
14 historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers; and

15 (d) Consider ways to increase engagement in agricultural
16 education and workforce development opportunities for youth in
17 historically underrepresented groups, so young people view farming as
18 a viable career.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) On or before October 31, 2022, the
20 department of agriculture shall submit a report in accordance with
21 RCW 43.01.036 to the governor and the legislature. The report must
22 describe the department's efforts to serve historically
23 underrepresented farmers and ranchers in Washington state pursuant to
24 section 3 of this act, identify any existing gaps, and include
25 recommendations to improve outreach to and resources for historically
26 underrepresented farmers and ranchers.

27 (2) The definitions in section 2 of this act apply throughout
28 this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 1 through 3 of this act
30 constitute a new chapter in Title 15 RCW.

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