
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5045

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Warnick, Lovelett, Robinson, Rolfes, Schoesler, Short, and Van De Wege)

READ FIRST TIME 01/22/21.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding opportunities for meat and poultry
2 processing and inspection; adding a new section to chapter 15.64 RCW;
3 adding a new section to chapter 89.08 RCW; and creating a new
4 section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Disruptions to the food supply chain due
7 to the coronavirus pandemic revealed the importance and limitations
8 of Washington's local meat processing system capacity. State
9 investment in local meat processors is needed to modernize operations
10 and ensure functional capacity of the system. Support for the small
11 meat processors provides multiple benefits for the greater public
12 good including continuity of food supply and resilience in the face
13 of supply chain disruptions, consumer food safety and public health,
14 animal health and welfare, and increased economic growth
15 opportunities for both meat processor small businesses, skilled
16 workforce, and livestock producers.

17 The legislature finds that consumers and small to mid-scale
18 farmers would both benefit from greater access to meat and poultry
19 processing facilities that would allow the farmer to sell meat and
20 poultry to consumers who would like a greater opportunity to support
21 local agriculture, while also ensuring that the meat and poultry are

1 inspected under a program that safeguards consumers from possible
2 harm. Direct marketing assistance will play a critical role in
3 considering the economic viability of meat and poultry processing
4 facilities and providing small and midsize farms with the ability to
5 sell meat and poultry to consumers at retail.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 15.64
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) The meat and poultry processing and marketing assistance
9 program is created.

10 (2) The meat and poultry processing and marketing assistance
11 program must assist small and midsize farms and small and midsize
12 processors in exploring options to expand capacity for processing
13 meat or meat and poultry for sale and direct marketing efforts. In
14 carrying out this duty, the meat and poultry processing and marketing
15 assistance program must:

16 (a) Assist farms in complying with federal, state, and local
17 rules and regulations as they apply to direct marketing of meat and
18 poultry products;

19 (b) Assist in developing infrastructure including, but not
20 limited to, custom meat facilities, slaughter facilities inspected by
21 the United States department of agriculture, and slaughter facilities
22 inspected by the department under a cooperative agreement with the
23 United States department of agriculture as appropriate to increase
24 direct marketing opportunities for farms;

25 (c) Assist processors in complying with federal, state, and local
26 rules and regulations as they apply to processing meat and poultry
27 and the marketing of meat and poultry;

28 (d) Assist in developing, in consultation with Washington State
29 University extension, training opportunities or apprenticeship
30 opportunities for slaughterers or inspectors;

31 (e) Provide information on direct marketing opportunities for
32 farms;

33 (f) Identify and help reduce market barriers facing farms in
34 direct marketing;

35 (g) Identify and help reduce barriers facing processors in
36 operating slaughter facilities;

37 (h) Assist in developing and submitting proposals to grant
38 programs to assist farm direct marketing efforts; and

1 (i) Perform other functions that will assist farms in directly
2 marketing their meat and poultry products.

3 (3) The department must work with the United States department of
4 agriculture to negotiate a cooperative agreement with the United
5 States department of agriculture in order to operate a state
6 inspection program.

7 (4) The department must collect data on the activities conducted
8 under this section and report to the legislature by December 31,
9 2021, pursuant to RCW 43.01.036. The report must include information
10 related to meat and poultry processing facility needs and information
11 related to the negotiations to enter into a cooperative agreement
12 with the United States department of agriculture to conduct state
13 inspections of meat and poultry facilities.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 89.08
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 The commission must develop a grant program to provide funding to
17 districts to provide access to meat and poultry processing and
18 inspection within the district. In addition to other funding needs to
19 provide access to meat and poultry processing and inspection within
20 the district, grant funding may be used by districts to establish a
21 mobile slaughter unit or to provide needed infrastructure to provide
22 for the retail sale of meat or poultry.

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