
SENATE BILL 5812

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senators Warnick, Stanford, Brown, and Schoesler

Read first time 01/11/22. Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks.

1 AN ACT Relating to including Benton county as a county qualifying
2 for the farm internship program; amending RCW 49.12.471; and
3 declaring an emergency.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 49.12.471 and 2020 c 212 s 1 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The director shall establish a farm internship pilot project
8 for the employment of farm interns on small farms under special
9 certificates at wages, if any, as authorized by the department and
10 subject to such limitations as to time, number, proportion, and
11 length of service as provided in this section and as prescribed by
12 the department. The pilot project consists of the following counties:
13 San Juan, Skagit, King, Whatcom, Kitsap, Pierce, Jefferson, Spokane,
14 Yakima, Chelan, Grant, Island, Snohomish, Kittitas, Lincoln,
15 Thurston, Walla Walla, Clark, Cowlitz, (~~and~~) Lewis, and Benton.

16 (2) A small farm may employ no more than three interns at one
17 time under this section.

18 (3) A small farm must apply for a special certificate on a form
19 made available by the director. The application must set forth: The
20 name of the farm and a description of the farm seeking the
21 certificate; the type of work to be performed by a farm intern; a

1 description of the internship program; the period of time for which
2 the certificate is sought and the duration of an internship; the
3 number of farm interns for which a special certificate is sought; the
4 wages, if any, that will be paid to the farm intern; any room and
5 board, stipends, and other remuneration the farm will provide to a
6 farm intern; and the total number of workers employed by the farm.

7 (4) Upon receipt of an application, the department shall review
8 the application and issue a special certificate to the requesting
9 farm within fifteen days if the department finds that:

10 (a) The farm qualifies as a small farm;

11 (b) There have been no serious violations of chapter 49.46 RCW or
12 Title 51 RCW that provide reasonable grounds to believe that the
13 terms of an internship agreement may not be complied with;

14 (c) The issuance of a certificate will not create unfair
15 competitive labor cost advantages nor have the effect of impairing or
16 depressing wage or working standards established for experienced
17 workers for work of a like or comparable character in the industry or
18 occupation at which the intern is to be employed;

19 (d) A farm intern will not displace an experienced worker; and

20 (e) The farm demonstrates that the interns will perform work for
21 the farm under an internship program that: (i) Provides a curriculum
22 of learning modules and supervised participation in farm work
23 activities designed to teach farm interns about farming practices and
24 farm enterprises; (ii) is based on the bona fide curriculum of an
25 educational or vocational institution; and (iii) is reasonably
26 designed to provide the intern with vocational knowledge and skills
27 about farming practices and enterprises. In assessing an internship
28 program, the department may consult with relevant college and
29 university departments and extension programs and state and local
30 government agencies involved in the regulation or development of
31 agriculture.

32 (5) A special certificate issued under this section must specify
33 the terms and conditions under which it is issued, including: The
34 name of the farm; the duration of the special certificate allowing
35 the employment of farm interns and the duration of an internship; the
36 total number of interns authorized under the special certificate; the
37 authorized wage rate, if any; and any room and board, stipends, and
38 other remuneration the farm will provide to the farm intern. A farm
39 intern may be paid at wages specified in the certificate only during

1 the effective period of the certificate and for the duration of the
2 internship.

3 (6) If the department denies an application for a special
4 certificate, notice of denial must be mailed to the farm. The farm
5 listed on the application may, within fifteen days after notice of
6 such action has been mailed, file with the director a petition for
7 review of the denial, setting forth grounds for seeking such a
8 review. If reasonable grounds exist, the director or the director's
9 authorized representative may grant such a review and, to the extent
10 deemed appropriate, afford all interested persons an opportunity to
11 be heard on such review.

12 (7) Before employing a farm intern, a farm must submit a
13 statement on a form made available by the director stating that the
14 farm understands: The requirements of the industrial welfare act,
15 this chapter, that apply to farm interns; that the farm must pay
16 workers' compensation premiums in the assigned intern risk class and
17 must pay workers' compensation premiums for nonintern work hours in
18 the applicable risk class; and that if the farm does not comply with
19 subsection (8) of this section, the director may revoke the special
20 certificate.

21 (8) The director may revoke a special certificate issued under
22 this section if a farm fails to: Comply with the requirements of the
23 industrial welfare act, this chapter, that apply to farm interns; pay
24 workers' compensation premiums in the assigned intern risk class; or
25 pay workers' compensation premiums in the applicable risk class for
26 nonintern work hours.

27 (9) Before the start of a farm internship, the farm and the
28 intern must sign a written agreement and send a copy of the agreement
29 to the department. The written agreement must, at a minimum:

30 (a) Describe the internship program offered by the farm,
31 including the skills and objectives the program is designed to teach
32 and the manner in which those skills and objectives will be taught;

33 (b) Explicitly state that the intern is not entitled to
34 unemployment benefits or minimum wages for work and activities
35 conducted pursuant to the internship program for the duration of the
36 internship;

37 (c) Describe the responsibilities, expectations, and obligations
38 of the intern and the farm, including the anticipated number of hours
39 of farm activities to be performed by and the anticipated number of
40 hours of curriculum instruction provided to the intern per week;

1 (d) Describe the activities of the farm and the type of work to
2 be performed by the farm intern; and

3 (e) (~~Describes~~ [Describe]) Describe any wages, room and board,
4 stipends, and other remuneration the farm will provide to the farm
5 intern.

6 (10) The department must limit the administrative costs of
7 implementing the internship pilot program by relying on farm
8 organizations and other stakeholders to perform outreach and inform
9 the farm community of the program and by limiting employee travel to
10 the investigation of allegations of noncompliance with program
11 requirements.

12 (11) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
13 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

14 (a) "Farm intern" means an individual who provides services to a
15 small farm under a written agreement and primarily as a means of
16 learning about farming practices and farm enterprises.

17 (b) "Farm internship program" means an internship program
18 described under subsection (4) (e) of this section.

19 (c) "Small farm" means a farm:

20 (i) Organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or
21 corporation;

22 (ii) That reports on the applicant's schedule F of form 1040 or
23 other applicable form filed with the United States internal revenue
24 service annual sales less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars;
25 and

26 (iii) Where all the owners or partners of the farm provide
27 regular labor to and participate in the management of the farm, and
28 own or lease the productive assets of the farm.

29 (12) The department shall monitor and evaluate the farm
30 internships authorized by this section and report to the appropriate
31 committees of the legislature by December 31, 2024. The report must
32 include, but not be limited to: The number of small farms that
33 applied for and received special certificates; the number of interns
34 employed as farm interns; the nature of the educational activities
35 provided to the farm interns; the wages and other remuneration paid
36 to farm interns; the number of and type of workers' compensation
37 claims for farm interns; the employment of farm interns following
38 farm internships; and other matters relevant to assessing farm
39 internships authorized in this section.

40 (13) This section expires December 31, 2025.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** This act is necessary for the immediate
2 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
3 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
4 effect immediately.

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