H-2532.1

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**HOUSE BILL 2324**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Maycumber, Robertson, Couture, Chambers, Cheney, and Stokesbary

AN ACT Relating to narcotics enforcement; adding a new section to chapter 43.43 RCW; repealing RCW 43.43.600, 43.43.610, 43.43.620, 43.43.630, 43.43.640, 43.43.650, and 43.43.655; and making appropriations.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.43 RCW to read as follows:

(1) There is created in the Washington state patrol a bureau of narcotics enforcement which is authorized to:

(a) Create a new regionalized framework to oversee the coordination of narcotic investigations between the Washington state patrol, the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, the attorney general, the federal bureau of investigation, and the federal drug enforcement administration. The bureau shall coordinate with the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs to develop the regionalized framework and must ensure that each region developed under this section contains no fewer than one county and no more than three counties. The bureau shall also coordinate federal, state, and local interjurisdictional narcotic investigations, with special attention given to the following:

(i) Coordination and cooperation with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials on mutual drug enforcement efforts and enhancement of such efforts through exploitation of potential intrastate, interstate, and international investigations beyond local or state jurisdictions and resources; and

(ii) Coordination and cooperation with federal, state, and local agencies, and with foreign governments, in programs designed to reduce the availability of narcotic drugs on the state and national market through nonenforcement methods;

(b) Conduct criminal narcotic investigations and assist in preparation for the prosecution of violators of controlled substance laws operating at intrastate, interstate, and international levels;

(c) Investigate and prepare for the criminal prosecution of drug trafficking organizations who perpetrate violence in our communities and terrorize citizens through fear and intimidation;

(d) Oversee the seizure and forfeiture of assets derived from, traceable to, or intended to be used for illicit drug trafficking; and

(e) Enforce the provisions of the controlled substances act, federal and state, as they pertain to the manufacture, distribution, and dispensing of controlled substances, with a priority focus on opioid trafficking, particularly fentanyl.

(2) The bureau shall hire or contract for the appropriate law enforcement and support personnel the bureau deems necessary to perform the duties required under this section. In addition to the requirements under subsection (1) of this section, the bureau shall:

(a) Where feasible, use existing facilities and systems; and

(b) When needed, contract for forensic lab and related criminal investigation services and any other necessary personnel.

(3) The bureau shall submit a report to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature by October 1, 2024, on progress towards compliance with creating the new bureau. The report must also provide budget and policy recommendations for continued support of the bureau.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The sum of $4,410,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, from the state general fund to the Washington state patrol and is subject to the following conditions and limitations: The amount in this section is provided solely for the Washington state patrol to create, staff, and support the bureau of narcotics enforcement. Of this amount:

(1) $2,797,000 is provided solely for staffing and administrative costs for the bureau of narcotics enforcement.

(2) $737,000 is provided solely for the toxicology laboratory division of the Washington state patrol to increase testing capacity. Of this amount, $88,000 is provided solely for the Washington state patrol to contract with private accredited toxicology labs to increase capacity for testing related to drug trafficking, including specific testing related to novel and emerging drugs or compounds that the Washington state patrol does not have current technologies to confirm.

(3) $876,000 is provided solely for the crime laboratory division of the Washington state patrol to increase testing capacity.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The sum of $10,000,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, from the state general fund to the department of commerce and is subject to the following conditions and limitations: The amount in this section is provided solely for the department of commerce to provide grant funding to local multijurisdictional task forces that previously received funding through the federal Edward Byrne memorial justice assistance grant program. Grants provided under this subsection must support narcotics enforcement and must be used consistent with the requirements of Edward Byrne memorial justice assistance grants and with national best practices for law enforcement.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The following acts or parts of acts are each repealed:

(1) RCW 43.43.600 (Drug control assistance unit—Created) and 1970 ex.s. c 63 s 1;

(2) RCW 43.43.610 (Drug control assistance unit—Duties) and 1983 c 3 s 107, 1980 c 69 s 1, & 1970 ex.s. c 63 s 2;

(3) RCW 43.43.620 (Drug control assistance unit—Additional duties—Information system on violations—Inter-unit communications network) and 1970 ex.s. c 63 s 3;

(4) RCW 43.43.630 (Drug control assistance unit—Use of existing facilities and systems) and 1970 ex.s. c 63 s 4;

(5) RCW 43.43.640 (Drug control assistance unit—Certain investigators exempt from state civil service act) and 1980 c 69 s 3 & 1970 ex.s. c 63 s 5;

(6) RCW 43.43.650 (Drug control assistance unit—Employment of necessary personnel) and 1970 ex.s. c 63 s 6; and

(7) RCW 43.43.655 (Drug control assistance unit—Special narcotics enforcement unit) and 1989 c 271 s 235.

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