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**SECOND ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5150**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senator Shewmake)

AN ACT Relating to the beef commission; amending RCW 16.67.120; and adding new sections to chapter 16.67 RCW.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 16.67.120 and 2002 c 313 s 83 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) There is hereby levied an assessment of ((~~one dollar~~)) up to $2.50 per head to be implemented as prescribed in subsection (2) of this section on all Washington cattle sold in this state or elsewhere to be paid by the seller at the time of sale: PROVIDED, That if such sale is accompanied by a brand inspection by the department such an assessment may be collected at the same time, place and in the same manner as brand inspection fees. Such fees may be collected by the livestock ((~~services division~~)) identification program of the department and transmitted to the commission: PROVIDED FURTHER, That, if such sale is made without a brand inspection by the department the assessment shall be paid by the seller and transmitted directly to the commission by the ((~~fifteenth~~)) 15th day of the month following the month the transaction occurred.

(2)(a) Beginning July 1, 2024, the assessment must be $1.50 per head. $0.50 of the $1.50 assessment levied under this subsection may not be collected at the first point of sale of any calf identified with a green tag as identified in RCW 16.57.160.

(b) Beginning January 1, 2025, the assessment must be $2.00 per head. $1.00 of the $2.00 assessment levied under this subsection may not be collected at the first point of sale of any calf identified with a green tag as identified in RCW 16.57.160.

(c) Beginning January 1, 2026, the assessment must be $2.50 per head. $1.50 of the $2.50 assessment levied under this subsection may not be collected at the first point of sale of any calf identified with a green tag as identified in RCW 16.57.160.

(3) The procedures for collecting all state and federal assessments under this chapter shall be as required by the federal order and as described by rules adopted by the commission.

(4) The commission shall submit a report by January 1st of each year, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, to the appropriate committees of the legislature having oversight over agriculture. The report must provide an accounting of the funds collected under this section for the previous year, including a record of the amount collected, the amount spent, and the purposes for which the funds were used.

(5) The commission shall hold meetings in different geographic regions of the state throughout the year, with at least two meetings held east of the crest of the Cascade mountains. Geographic regions must include the northeast, southeast, central southwest, and northwest regions of the state.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 16.67 RCW to read as follows:

The commission may fund, conduct, or otherwise participate in scientific research related to beef including, without limitation, to improve production, quality, transportation, processing, distribution, and environmental stewardship.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 16.67 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Of the assessments levied in RCW 16.67.120, a producer or owner of cattle from whom an assessment is collected has the right to request a refund of not more than $.50 per head beginning July 1, 2024, not more than $1.00 per head beginning January 1, 2025, and not more than $1.50 per head beginning January 1, 2026. Refund requests must be mailed to the commission within 90 calendar days of the assessment.

(2) The commission must process the requested refunds on a calendar quarterly basis. Any refund request that is received by the commission less than 15 days from the end of the calendar quarter must be paid at the end of the next quarter.

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