

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1552

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Directing the state conservation commission to conduct a study of urban agricultural opportunities and barriers in the state.

Sponsors: Representatives Reeves, Ramel, Springer, Gregerson, Fosse and Doglio.

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks

Background:

Washington State Department of Agriculture.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) oversees, manages, regulates, and supports a variety of programs related to food safety and agriculture in the state. Programs include animal and livestock health, commodity inspection, food safety, food assistance, pesticide and fertilizer inspection, and business and marketing support.

Food Policy Forum.

Together with the State Conservation Commission, the WSDA convenes the Food Policy Forum (Forum). The Forum is a public-private partnership that must develop recommendations to promote a variety of food system goals including:

- improved coordination and communication between local, state, and regional food policy entities;
- reducing food insecurity and hunger in Washington;
- examining ways to encourage retention of small and mid-scale farmers;
- expand and promote programs that bring healthy and nutritious Washington-grown foods to Washington residents; and
- increase the availability of Washington-grown foods throughout the state.

The Forum issued a report in December 2022 titled *Land Use Policy Solutions to Stem Agricultural Land Loss*. The report found, among other things, that just as parks and open space help to maintain livable communities, opportunities to grow food also enhance the

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livability of urban places. The report included a policy recommendation to increase access to fresh food by supporting urban, peri-urban, indoor, and other emerging forms of agricultural production, and by directing the Office of Farmland Preservation to conduct a stakeholder review of the opportunities and barriers related to urban agriculture.

Summary:

The State Conservation Commission (Commission) must conduct a study of urban agricultural opportunities and barriers in the state. The study must examine, among other things:

- how urban agriculture can provide critical economic development, food access, and education opportunities in local communities;
- opportunities within urban agriculture, such as community gardens and urban farms, to give people access to grow their own food and create jobs, provide fresh food, and expose future farmers to career development; and
- challenges, including access to land, water, and expertise, that limit the potential of urban agriculture.

In conducting the study, the Commission must collaborate with the following entities:

- the Washington State Department of Agriculture;
- the University of Washington;
- Washington State University;
- the Food Policy Forum; and
- other stakeholders as deemed appropriate by the Commission.

The Commission must submit the results of the study to the committees of the Legislature with jurisdiction over agricultural issues by June 30, 2024.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0
Senate	49	0

Effective: July 23, 2023