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**Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**HB 1603**

**Brief Description:** Creating a location-based promotion program for Washington food and agricultural products.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Morgan, Dent, Reeves, Chapman, Orcutt, Springer, Kretz, Kloba, Lekanoff, Paul, Gregerson, Eslick, Tharinger, Doglio and Reed; by request of Department of Agriculture.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Agriculture to convene an advisory committee to identify the appropriate scope and nature of a voluntary location-based program to brand and promote local food and agricultural products.
- Repeals the From the Heart of Washington Program.

**Hearing Date:** 2/7/23

**Staff:** Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

**Background:**

The Department of Agriculture (WSDA) supports the viability and vitality of agriculture while protecting consumers, public health, and the environment. This includes providing fee-based services to the agricultural community, promoting Washington agricultural products, and ensuring that a variety of agricultural regulations are observed.

The From the Heart of Washington Program (Program) was created by the WSDA in June 2002.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The purpose of the Program was to increase in-state demand for Washington agricultural products, to present an accurate picture of the value of agriculture as part of the state's economy, and to show agriculture's role in sustaining rural communities. The Program was funded with one-time federal grant funds. After federal funds were exhausted, the Legislature gave the WSDA authority to establish a private, non-profit corporation under the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act to continue the Program. The Program was formally dissolved in 2008.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Director of the Department of Agriculture (Director) must establish an advisory committee made up of interested agricultural and food production organizations in order to identify the appropriate scope and nature of a voluntary location-based Program to brand and promote local food and agricultural products. The Department of Agriculture must actively seek nonstate funding sources to operate the Program, and any funds received must be deposited in the Agricultural Local Fund.

The Director must submit a report that contains recommendations for Program development and implementation to the appropriate committees of the Legislature during the fiscal year that ends June 30, 2024.

The From the Heart of Washington Program is repealed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.