

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2302

As Passed House:
February 8, 2024

Title: An act relating to extending the pesticide application safety committee.

Brief Description: Extending the pesticide application safety committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Chapman, Davis and Timmons.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture and Natural Resources: 1/23/24, 1/30/24 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/8/24, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the expiration date of the Pesticide Application Safety Committee to July 1, 2035.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Chapman, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Reeves, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kloba, Kretz, Lekanoff, Orcutt, Schmick and Springer.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

The Pesticide Application Safety Committee (Committee) was formed in 2019 to explore how the Departments of Agriculture (WSDA), Labor and Industries (L&I), and Health

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.

(DOH), and the Washington Poison Center collect and track data and consider the feasibility and requirements of developing a shared database, including how the DOH could use existing tools to better display multiagency data regarding pesticides. The Committee may also evaluate and recommend policy options related to:

- improving agricultural pesticide application safety;
- establishing baseline data;
- improving communication, information, and education to and among members of the agricultural community, including developing materials in Spanish, using translation applications, and working with manufacturers regarding pesticide labeling;
- compiling the industry's best practices to limit pesticide exposure;
- reporting of pesticide exposure, including gaining better understanding of why workers do not report exposures, and related issues;
- creating incentives for using new technology; and
- evaluating and exploring exposure prevention techniques and protocols and best practices for use of personal safety equipment and reflective gear.

Members of the Committee include: legislators from the two largest caucuses from both chambers of the Legislature; agency heads from the WSDA, the DOH, L&I, and the Department of Natural Resources; the Dean of the Washington State University's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences; the pesticide safety education coordinator at the Washington State University Cooperative Extension; and the Director of the University of Washington Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center. The Secretary of the DOH and the Director of the WSDA are the cochairs of the Committee.

An advisory work group was also created to collect information and make recommendations to the full Committee on topics requiring unique expertise and perspectives on issues within the Committee's jurisdiction. The advisory group consists of: a representative from the WSDA; two representatives of employee organizations that represent farmworkers; two farmworkers with expertise on pesticide application; a representative of community and migrant health centers; a toxicologist; a representative of growers who use air blast sprayers; a representative of growers who use aerial pesticide application; a representative of growers who use fumigation to apply pesticides; and a representative of aerial applicators.

The advisory work group must hold meetings at the Committee's request. To reduce costs, the advisory work group must conduct meetings using teleconferencing or other methods and may hold one in-person meeting per fiscal year.

These provisions expire in 2025.

Summary of Bill:

The Pesticide Application Safety Committee expires on July 1, 2035, instead of on July 1,

2025. The provision requiring the advisory work group to conduct their meetings primarily via teleconferencing or other methods other than one in-person meeting per fiscal year is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a simple bill but has some history behind it. There was a task force in 2018 that looked at ways to improve pesticide application safety and data collection. The task force recommended the creation of the Pesticide Application Safety Committee (Committee), and the Committee was created in 2019. There is also an advisory work group to advise on other issues of concern related to pesticides and safety. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly delayed the Committee's progress. It has since restarted and is doing good work but needs some extra time to continue its efforts in improving pesticide application safety and completing its work.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Tom Dent, prime sponsor; and Griselda Arias, Department of Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.