
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5996

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Senate Labor & Commerce (originally sponsored by Senators Saldaña, Valdez, Hunt, Shewmake, Trudeau, Kauffman, Conway, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Keiser, Nguyen, Nobles, Stanford, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 01/31/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to collecting data on the H-2A worker program and
2 from certain hand harvesters; adding a new section to chapter 50.75
3 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 50.38 RCW; and creating a new
4 section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 50.75
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) Whenever the department conducts a field check or field visit
9 of an employer, the department must collect the following
10 information:

11 (a) The number of H-2A workers the employer has at each work
12 site; and

13 (b) The actual geographic location of where the H-2A workers are
14 living during their employment with the employer.

15 (2) The department must compile the information and compare the
16 number of workers sought by an employer on the employer's H-2A
17 application with the number of H-2A workers actually working for the
18 employer.

19 (3) The department must make the information available to the
20 advisory committee appointed under RCW 50.75.040 on a quarterly
21 basis.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 50.38
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) The department must conduct, or cause to be conducted, a
4 comprehensive annual wage survey of workers hand harvesting apples,
5 cherries, pears, and blueberries.

6 (2) At a minimum, the surveys must:

7 (a) Gather information on wage rates received for harvesting
8 activities;

9 (b) Include a question concerning whether the survey respondent
10 made an unemployment insurance claim in the survey period; and

11 (c) Gather information on the respondent's age, gender, and
12 whether the respondent was born in the United States or the number of
13 years the respondent has lived in the United States.

14 (3) The office must:

15 (a) Utilize a phone survey designed to receive responses from a
16 minimum of 850 total fruit harvesters;

17 (b) Beginning fiscal year 2025, include field surveys designed to
18 receive responses from a minimum of:

19 (i) 1,200 apple harvesters;

20 (ii) 200 pear harvesters;

21 (iii) 200 blueberry harvesters; and

22 (iv) 350 cherry harvesters.

23 (4) The department must provide \$25 incentive payments for survey
24 respondents who are eligible to respond to the survey.

25 (5) The department must submit a report to the appropriate
26 committees of the legislature annually by May 1st on surveys
27 conducted under this section. The report must include:

28 (a) Information about the number of responses; and

29 (b) Individual responses, without names, by age, gender, United
30 States birth or number of years in the United States, and whether the
31 respondent filed an unemployment insurance claim.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** If any part of this act is found to be in
33 conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to
34 the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of
35 this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with
36 respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not
37 affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application
38 to the agencies concerned. Rules adopted under this act must meet

1 federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of
2 federal funds by the state.

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