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**SENATE BILL 5117**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Muzzall, Braun, Chapman, Christian, Dozier, King, Schoesler, Short, Wagoner, Warnick, and J. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to protecting agriculture; and adding a new chapter to Title 43 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature declares that it is the continuing policy of the state of Washington, in cooperation with federal and local governments and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to: (a) Promote a stable food supply by maintaining a healthy agricultural economy in Washington state; and (b) ensure that the regulatory environment does not adversely affect the ability of Washington's farmers to continue to grow and sell their products to feed citizens of Washington state and the world.

(2) In order to carry out the policy set forth in this chapter, it is the continuing responsibility of the state of Washington and all agencies of the state to use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of state policy, to improve and coordinate plans, functions, programs, and resources in order to:

(a) Promote agriculture while protecting public health and welfare;

(b) Provide opportunities for farmers and ranchers to utilize agricultural land to produce agricultural products;

(c) Aid farmers and landowners in utilizing the land for the best combination of production, habitat, carbon sequestration, and any combination of commercial and conservation activities; and

(d) Preserve important historical, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage of agriculture.

(3) The legislature authorizes and directs that, to the fullest extent possible, the policies, regulations, and laws of the state of Washington shall be interpreted and administered in accordance with the policies set forth in this chapter and that all branches of government of this state, including state agencies, municipal and public corporations, and counties shall:

(a) Utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences in planning and decision making with respect to issues that have an impact on the agricultural economy in Washington state;

(b) Identify and develop methods and procedures, in consultation with the department of agriculture and the state conservation commission, which will ensure that presently unquantified values will be given appropriate consideration in decision making, along with economic and technical considerations;

(c)(i) Include in every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major actions significantly affecting agriculture, a detailed statement by the responsible official regarding:

(A) The economic impact of the proposed action on the conduct of agriculture in Washington;

(B) Any adverse effects that cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented;

(C) Alternatives to the proposed action;

(D) The relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term agricultural productivity; and

(E) Any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented;

(ii) Prior to making any detailed statement, the responsible official shall consult with and obtain the comments of any public agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any impact on agriculture involved; and

(e) Study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal that involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) The director of financial management or the director's designee, in cooperation with appropriate legislative committees and legislative staff, must establish a mechanism for the determination of the fiscal impact of proposed legislation which, if enacted into law, would directly or indirectly increase or decrease regulatory costs incurred by entities engaged in agriculture. The office of financial management shall, when requested by a member of the state legislature, report in writing as to the fiscal impact and the report may be known as a fiscal note.

(b) For purposes of this subsection, "entities engaged in agriculture" includes entities registered with the office of the secretary of state as engaged in the manufacturing, production, or processing of agricultural products.

(2) Fiscal notes must indicate by fiscal year the total impact on the agricultural economy for the first two years the legislation would be in effect and also a cumulative six-year forecast of the fiscal impact. Where feasible and applicable, the fiscal note must also indicate the fiscal impact on each industry or a representative sampling of the industry broadly.

(3) A fiscal note must be provided only upon request of a member of the state legislature. A request for a fiscal note on legislation is considered to be a continuing request for a fiscal note on any formal alteration of the legislation in the form of an amendment to the legislation that are adopted by a committee or a chamber of the legislature or a substitute version of the legislation that is adopted by a committee and preparation of the fiscal note on the prior version of the legislation must stop, unless the legislator requesting the fiscal note specifies otherwise or the altered version is first adopted or enacted in the last week of a legislative session.

(4) Fiscal notes must be completed within one week of the request unless an extended time period is authorized by the requesting legislator. In the event a fiscal note has not been completed within one week of a request, a daily report must be prepared for the requesting legislator by the director of financial management. The daily report must summarize the progress in preparing the fiscal note. If the request is referred to the director of commerce, the daily report must also include the date and time such a referral is made.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1)(a) Beginning August 1, 2025, an agency considering a significant agency action must conduct an assessment in accordance with this chapter to inform and support the agency's consideration of impacts on agricultural producers and communities that rely on agriculture. The assessment performed by the agency is intended to assist the agency in identifying issues and decisions that impact agriculture in order to reduce economic harms to the agricultural economy and the communities that rely on it.

(b) An agency must aspire to complete the assessment for a significant agency action without delaying the completion of the underlying agency action.

(2) By August 1, 2025, and periodically thereafter, after an opportunity for public comment on its determinations, each covered agency must:

(a) Publish on its website the types of agency actions that the agency has determined are significant agency actions that require an agricultural economic assessment under this section;

(b) Provide notification of the determination of the types of significant agency actions in the Washington State Register; and

(c) Prepare an agricultural economic assessment when considering a listed action, after publication of the list of any additional significant agency actions identified under (a) of this subsection.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This chapter may be known and cited as the food economics, availability, and security over time (FEAST) act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 4 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

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