

**RCW 15.115.260 Annual assessments—Adjustments—Referendum—**

**Temporary reduction—Limit on annual assessment.** (1)(a) The initial annual assessments are the amounts most recently approved by referendum by wheat producers and barley producers and effective at the time the grain commission is established:

(i) The initial annual assessment on wheat is three-fourths of one percent of the net receipts at the first point of sale;

(ii) The initial annual assessment on barley is one percent of the net receipts at the first point of sale.

(b) The initial annual assessments established in this subsection are effective unless and until changed pursuant to the procedure in subsection (2) of this section.

(2)(a) If the commission determines, based on information available to it, that the revenue from the assessment levied on wheat or barley under this chapter is too high or is inadequate to accomplish the purposes of this chapter, then with the oversight of the director the commission shall adopt a resolution setting forth the needs of the industry, the extent and probable cost of the commission activities identified as necessary to address the needs of the industry together with a brief statement justifying each activity, the proposed new assessment rate, and the expected revenue from the proposed assessment levied. The resolution must be submitted to the director for review and approval.

(b) If the director objects to the proposed new assessment rate, the director shall explain the reasons for the objection to the commission in writing. The commission may adopt a revised resolution and submit it to the director for review and approval.

(c) Upon receiving the director's approval and with the director's oversight, the commission may conduct a referendum to determine whether affected producers assent to the proposed new assessment rate, or may refer the matter to the director to conduct the referendum on behalf of the commission. Only wheat producers may vote on a proposed new assessment rate on wheat, and only barley producers may vote on a proposed new assessment rate on barley.

(i) The producers have assented to the new rate if more than fifty percent by number and more than fifty percent by volume of those replying assent. The determination by volume is made on the basis of volume as determined in the list of affected producers created under RCW 15.115.250.

(ii) Results of the referendum must be communicated via the news media.

(iii) If the requisite assent is given, the commission shall adopt the new rate at its next meeting. The new rate must be adopted by rule in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW, except as provided in RCW 15.115.160.

(3)(a) Notwithstanding the provisions in subsection (2) of this section, the commission may, by majority vote of a quorum of its members, adopt a finding that its current revenue substantially exceeds that needed to support the current needs of the industry and the current cost of commission activities and order a temporary reduction in the annual assessments below the rate currently authorized under subsection (1) of this section.

(b) With the director's approval, such a reduction commences on July 1st following the commission's action and expires automatically on June 30th of the subsequent year unless extended by a new action of the commission under this subsection.

(c) Any action taken under this subsection must be communicated to affected producers via the news media and any other means it deems effective.

(4) The annual assessment authorized in this chapter may not exceed three percent of the total market value of all affected units sold, processed, stored, or delivered for sale, processing, or storage by all affected producers of wheat or barley during the year to which the assessment applies. [2009 c 33 s 27.]