

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5734

As Passed House:

April 6, 2001

Title: An act relating to agricultural fairs.

Brief Description: Modifying requirements to receive state allocations for an agricultural fair.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Agriculture & International Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Hale, Hewitt and Parlette).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 3/30/01 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/6/01, 93-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the director of the Department of Agriculture to allow a county fair that has operated at least two years to reorganize as an area fair and be eligible for state fair funding.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives G. Chandler, Republican Co-Chair; Linville, Democratic Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; B. Chandler, Dunshee, Grant, Hunt, Kirby, Quall, Roach, Schoesler and Sump.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Fair Fund allocates funding to qualifying fairs to encourage agricultural fairs and train rural youth. Fairs eligible for state fair fund allocations are divided into four categories:

- 1) Area Fairs - Fairs that are not under the jurisdiction of boards of county commissioners and are organized to serve an area larger than one county;
- 2) County and District Fairs - Fairs organized to serve the interests of a single county that are under the control and supervision of the county commissioners of their respective counties;
- 3) Community Fairs - Fairs organized primarily to serve a smaller area than an area or county fair; and
- 4) Youth Shows and Fairs - Fairs approved by agents of the Washington State University or the Superintendent of Public Instruction that serve three or more counties.

Eighty-five percent of allocations from the state fair fund must be distributed to agricultural fairs based on a merit system. The merit system takes into accounts such things as the area and population served by a fair, youth participation levels, attendance, gate receipts, type of exhibits, prizes paid, community support, and conditions of and improvements to the fair grounds. The remaining 15 percent of allocations from the fund must be used for special assistance to any participating fair and for administrative expenses.

Before a fair may be eligible to receive state fair fund allocations it must have conducted two consecutive fairs immediately preceding an application for funding. Between January 1994 and June 1997, the director of the Department of Agriculture had the authority to waive the two-year operating requirement for county fairs that had received fair funding and reorganized as an area fair.

Summary of Bill:

The ability of the director of the Department of Agriculture to waive the requirement that an agricultural fair must successfully operate for two consecutive years before receiving fair fund allocations no longer expires on June 30, 1997. Specifically, county fairs that have successfully operated for at least two years may reorganize as an area fair and be eligible for state fair funding.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill would allow the Benton-Franklin County Fair to change from a

county fair to an area fair without suffering funding consequences. The bill would result in the Benton County Fair Association being allowed to do what it always has done.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Leslie Emerick, Washington State Department of Agriculture; and Heather Hansen, Washington State Fairs Association.