
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6343

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senate Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles, Swecker, Haugen, Hatfield, and Keiser)

READ FIRST TIME 02/03/10.

1 AN ACT Relating to the establishment of the Washington food policy
2 forum; adding a new chapter to Title 15 RCW; and providing an
3 expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) A number of governmental agencies and programs of the state
7 share goals and missions relating to food, nutrition, agriculture,
8 health, education, and economic development through sustained
9 agricultural production and improved access to nutritious foods;

10 (b) The food and agriculture industry generates forty-two billion
11 dollars annually, employs one hundred sixty thousand people, and
12 contributes thirteen percent to the state's economy;

13 (c) Agriculture is a leading employer in the state, produces over
14 three hundred different crops, and is composed of many diverse types of
15 agricultural endeavors;

16 (d) Washington state continues to lose approximately seventy
17 thousand acres of farmland every year to nonfarming uses and the
18 average age of farmers in the state is fifty-seven;

1 (e) Washington is currently ranked twenty-eighth in the nation for
2 very low food security with one hundred twelve thousand households
3 experiencing hunger, a twenty-four percent increase from 2008;

4 (f) According to data average for the years 2004 through 2008,
5 nearly sixty-one percent of Washington adults are either obese or
6 overweight;

7 (g) Obesity contributes substantially to the burden of preventable
8 illnesses and premature death, which are estimated to cost Washington
9 almost two billion dollars annually; and

10 (h) The current food system in Washington state is complex and
11 directly affected by the activities and policies of multiple
12 nongovernmental organizations, state agencies, and local governments,
13 and a coordinated, systemic approach is necessary to improve the health
14 of Washington's citizens and improve the economic viability of
15 agriculture.

16 (2) The legislature recognizes the need to understand the impacts
17 of governmental rules and regulations on the viability of the
18 agricultural sector and on the ability of citizens of all backgrounds
19 to obtain sufficient, high quality foods for themselves and their
20 families.

21 (3) The purpose of this act is to provide for the establishment of
22 a forum whereby state food policy, food-related programs, and food-
23 related issues can be examined, improved, and better integrated to
24 accomplish the overarching public goals. It is the intent of the
25 legislature to place the state in a favorable position to qualify for
26 available federal funds, moneys from foundations, and other sources to
27 fund the activities of the forum.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington food policy forum is
29 established. The purpose of the forum is to develop recommendations to
30 advance the following food system goals:

31 (a) To increase production, sales, and consumption of Washington-
32 grown foods;

33 (b) To develop and promote programs that bring healthy Washington
34 grown foods to Washington residents, including increased state
35 purchasing of local food products for school, adult care programs, and
36 other state-funded food programs;

1 (c) To review and develop programs that support providing proper
2 nutrition and avoid burdens of obesity and chronic diet-related
3 diseases;

4 (d) To protect the land and water resources needed for sustained
5 local food production;

6 (e) To examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number of
7 farmers, the educational needs for an adequate agricultural workforce,
8 and to provide for the continued economic viability of local food
9 production, processing, and distribution in the state; and

10 (f) To reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state and ensure
11 that the benefits of a healthy Washington food system are shared with
12 families at all income levels, and particularly with vulnerable
13 children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and communities of
14 color.

15 (2) Recommendations shall include benchmarks and criteria for
16 measuring progress in achieving each goal.

17 (3) Recommendations shall consider, but not be limited to, ways in
18 which the following may help achieve each of the five goals:

19 (a) Increased collaboration and communication between state
20 agencies;

21 (b) Increased collaboration and communication between local, state,
22 and federal agencies;

23 (c) Innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage
24 private and public market influence such as through institutional
25 purchasing and contracts;

26 (d) A review of (i) the future of farming study that was
27 coordinated by the department of agriculture with regard to the goals
28 established in this section, (ii) reports issued by the office of
29 farmland preservation with regard to the goals established in this
30 section, and (iii) data and analysis of food insecurity across the
31 state as reported by the department of health behavioral risk factors
32 surveillance surveys;

33 (e) Improvements to state or federal laws or regulations relevant
34 to the food system and food security in the state;

35 (f) Improvements in state or federal program implementation
36 relevant to the food system and food security in the state;

37 (g) Identifying additional federal, state, local, and private
38 investments needed to accomplish the recommendations.

1 (4) In developing its recommendations, the forum:

2 (a) Shall coordinate with the office of farmland preservation to
3 avoid duplication of effort;

4 (b) Shall solicit public input through public hearings or
5 informational sessions;

6 (c) May conduct research and analysis as needed within financial
7 resources available to the forum; and

8 (d) Shall invite additional stakeholder participation through an
9 advisory committee created to address issues identified by the forum as
10 requiring study or particular expertise.

11 (5) The forum may establish advisory committees to address specific
12 issue areas.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) All members of the Washington food
14 policy forum are voting members.

15 (2) The following are invited to participate as ex officio members
16 of the Washington food policy forum convened under section 4(1) of this
17 act:

18 (a) The director of the department of agriculture or the director's
19 designee;

20 (b) The secretary of the department of health or the secretary's
21 designee;

22 (c) The superintendent of public instruction or the
23 superintendent's designee;

24 (d) The director of the department of commerce or the director's
25 designee;

26 (e) The secretary of the department of social and health services
27 or the secretary's designee;

28 (f) The dean of the college of agricultural, human, and natural
29 resource sciences at Washington State University or the dean's
30 designee;

31 (g) The director of the department of ecology or the director's
32 designee;

33 (h) A representative from the state conservation commission office
34 of farmland preservation; and

35 (i) A representative from the University of Washington who has
36 expertise in food systems or nutrition appointed by the president of
37 the University of Washington.

1 (3) The following members shall be appointed by the governor to the
2 food policy forum:

3 (a) Five farmer representatives. The governor shall endeavor to
4 ensure that geographic diversity, size of operation, and farmer age are
5 balanced among the five farmer representatives, and shall select the
6 farmer representatives from persons nominated by established
7 agricultural organizations;

8 (b) One representative who represents food distribution,
9 processing, and marketing interests;

10 (c) One representative who represents direct-to-consumer marketing
11 efforts;

12 (d) One representative who represents community-based efforts to
13 address nutrition and public health;

14 (e) One representative who represents nongovernmental statewide
15 anti-hunger efforts;

16 (f) One representative who represents food banks;

17 (g) One representative who represents nongovernmental statewide
18 efforts to protect the state's land, air, and water;

19 (h) One representative from a labor union that represents workers
20 in the food industry;

21 (i) One representative from the international trade sector with
22 expertise in the trade of food products; and

23 (j) One person representing retail grocers who own a single store
24 or a regional chain with less than ten million five hundred thousand
25 dollars in gross revenue per location annually, nominated by an
26 established food industry association.

27 (4) The fourteen governor-appointed members shall be appointed for
28 terms of three years or until a successor is appointed. Members are
29 eligible to be reappointed.

30 (5) The chair of the forum shall be elected by the members of the
31 forum for a term not to exceed two years.

32 (6) The public members of the forum shall serve without
33 compensation from state funds. The ex officio members of the forum
34 shall serve without additional compensation of state funds. Members of
35 the forum may receive reimbursement from the forum for travel expenses
36 as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 if funds for forum
37 operations are available as determined by the director of the office of
38 financial management.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The governor shall appoint a person to
2 convene an organizational meeting of the food policy forum. At its
3 first meeting, the forum must, at a minimum, (a) elect a forum chair
4 from among its members, (b) identify funding sources for the forum, and
5 (c) begin the development of a work plan.

6 (2) No state agency or state university may be compelled to incur
7 expenses in connection with the operation of the forum.

8 (3) The forum shall report its initial findings and recommendations
9 by December 1st of the year following the date of the second meeting of
10 the forum. Thereafter, the forum shall submit an annual report that
11 includes recommendations and progress on benchmarks by December 1st
12 each year. These reports shall be submitted to the office of the
13 governor and to the offices of the chief clerk of the house of
14 representatives and the secretary of the senate.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This chapter expires July 1, 2015.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act constitute
17 a new chapter in Title 15 RCW.

--- END ---