
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1188

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By House Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Lytton, MacEwen, Haigh, Tharinger, Blake, Wilcox, Morris, Ryu, Morrell, Pike, and Van De Wege)

READ FIRST TIME 02/14/13.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a focused effort on reestablishing a
2 rural agricultural economy in western Washington by making investments
3 aimed at returning underproducing land back into a state of active
4 agricultural production; adding a new section to chapter 43.23 RCW;
5 creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that there is a
8 large collection of small acreage landholdings in the central and
9 southern Puget Sound region that are currently appropriate for
10 agricultural production but are being maintained in a fallow state.
11 Collectively, these landholdings represent a potentially significant
12 agricultural base that could, through a focused effort on
13 reestablishing a rural agricultural economy in western Washington, be
14 used as a foundation for rural economic development and the
15 rejuvenation of a local agricultural industry and way of life.

16 (2) The legislature further finds that there is a significant and
17 growing demand for local agricultural products and organic grains used
18 as feedstock by western Washington dairy, egg, and livestock producers.
19 Local organic grain growers would find an existing local market for

1 their product among producers who must currently rely on organic grains
2 brought in from other states or imported from foreign countries.
3 Expanding this synergy between locally grown organic grains, other
4 local agricultural products, and local demand would benefit the growers
5 and producers, enhance the local rural economy, and allow consumers an
6 option to enjoy the holistic benefits of truly local food sourcing.

7 (3) The legislature further finds that an investment in an
8 inventory of the idle lands in western Washington that assesses the
9 viability of expanding the cultivation of organic and specialty grains
10 and other agricultural production in western Washington is a tool for
11 connecting potential growers with the existing local market and for
12 promoting a resurgence in central and southern Puget Sound agriculture
13 that turns currently underutilized agricultural lands into a resource
14 that drives rural economic development.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.23 RCW
16 to read as follows:

17 (1) To inform a focused effort on reestablishing a rural
18 agricultural economy in western Washington that focuses on investments
19 aimed at returning underproducing land back into a state of active
20 agricultural production, the department must rely on existing programs
21 to develop an inventory of idle agricultural lands in the following
22 western Washington counties: Clallam, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis,
23 Thurston, Pierce, Clark, Cowlitz, Pacific, Kitsap, Grays Harbor,
24 Island, and San Juan. The initial focus of the survey must be land
25 located in the central and southern Puget Sound region.

26 (2) For the purposes of this section, idle lands are to be
27 considered lands that have been recently removed from crop production,
28 lands that have in the past been used to support livestock operations
29 that are not currently used for that purpose, open spaces not
30 designated for conflicting use, or other lands suitable for
31 agricultural operations, such as the raising of organic and specialty
32 grains.

33 (3) The department shall, during the course of implementing this
34 section, expand upon the agricultural lands assessment project that the
35 department has conducted since 2002. The department shall expand this
36 mapping to include idle agricultural lands suitable for the commercial

1 growing of organic and specialty grains. Project elements must
2 include:

3 (a) An initial assessment of idle agricultural lands using the
4 current database maintained by the department;

5 (b) The identification of potential parcels using a combination of
6 field mapping, aerial photography, and statewide parcel databases;

7 (c) An evaluation of potential fields using soil layers, wetlands,
8 and other limiting factors;

9 (d) An assessment of water availability as needed;

10 (e) Field verification of potential fields; and

11 (f) The production of a geographic information system layer and
12 accompanying database that will identify parcels in western Washington
13 counties currently idle from agricultural activity and evaluate the
14 quality of those parcels in terms of growing organic and specialty
15 grains.

16 (4) The department must consult with Washington State University in
17 the implementation of this section.

18 (5) This section expires July 31, 2017.

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