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**SENATE BILL 5934**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Brown, Warnick, and Chase

AN ACT Relating to creating a joint legislative task force on fostering innovation and retaining and creating jobs in Washington; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature recognizes the important role of research and innovation to growing a vibrant economy in Washington. Washington enjoys many benefits as a region that make it a desirable location including a skilled workforce, world class research institutions, strong and vibrant economic sectors, and a diverse international trade sector. However, Washington competes in a global economy, and many states and regions offer a variety of economic incentives, infrastructure investments, workforce training, and other tools to attract new business development to their region. Through the establishment of a joint legislative task force, the legislature intends to identify best practices for fostering an investment ecosystem that retains current jobs and attracts new business development in targeted high growth, high wage industries.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) A legislative task force on fostering innovation and retaining and creating jobs in Washington is established, with eleven members appointed as follows:

(a) The president of the senate must appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate;

(b) The speaker of the house of representatives must appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives;

(c) The director of the department of commerce or the director's designee;

(d) A representative from higher education appointed by the council of presidents;

(e) The executive director of the state board for community and technical colleges or the executive director's designee;

(f) The executive director of the Washington association of economic development associations or the executive director's designee;

(g) A representative from the business community appointed by the association of Washington business;

(h) The director of the Pacific Northwest national laboratory or the director's designee; and

(i) A representative from a targeted high growth sector appointed by the director of the department of commerce.

(2) The task force must:

(a) Choose a chair or cochairs from among its legislative membership at its initial meeting. The initial meeting must be called by agreement of a majority of the appointed members;

(b) Review current efforts to promote job retention and creation in Washington and compare those programs to other states and regions to find best practices for fostering an ecosystem of innovation in Washington to retain and attract new investments in high growth, high skill, and high demand industries. The review must also include identifying current and potential federal funding opportunities related to research and key high growth sectors, and how to strategically leverage those funds in Washington;

(c) Provide any recommendations identified by the task force that involve statutory changes, funding recommendations, or administrative action to the legislature. If statutory changes are recommended, the task force must provide the recommendations in the form of draft legislation. Task force recommendations require the approval of a majority of the appointed members;

(d) Ensure that the task force provides ample opportunity for input from: Interested stakeholders including industry leaders in targeted sectors; statewide organizations representing business and labor interests, local governments, and economic development organizations; and members of the public.

(3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by senate committee services and the office of program research. The department of commerce, and other relevant state agencies identified by the task force during the course of its work, must cooperate with the task force and provide information and assistance at the request of the task force.

(4) Legislative members of the task force must be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

(5) Task force expenditures are subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their successor committees.

(6) The task force must provide recommendations, if any, to the appropriate legislative committees, as described under subsection (2)(c) of this section and consistent with RCW 43.01.036 by November 1, 2015.

(7) This section expires June 30, 2016.

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