

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6206

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As of January 16, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to avoiding farmland conversion.

**Brief Description:** Avoiding farmland conversion.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Morton, Bauer, McCaslin, Spanel, Goings, Rasmussen, Swecker, Snyder and Prince.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Environment: 1/20/98, 1/23/98.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

**Staff:** Kari Guy (786-7437)

**Background:** The Growth Management Act requires counties and cities planning under the act to designate agricultural lands that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products. Development regulations must then be developed to ensure conservation of these agricultural lands. The regulations must also ensure that use of lands adjacent to agricultural lands do not interfere with the continued use of the land for the production of food or agricultural lands. State agencies are required to comply with the local comprehensive plans and development regulations.

It has been suggested that some state agency actions may encourage the conversion of valuable agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, through state programs that approve, undertake, or finance construction projects, or through the management of state lands and facilities.

**Summary of Bill:** The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development must develop criteria for identifying the effects of state programs on the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Each state agency must then review its policies to determine whether those policies could contribute to the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The agencies must consider alternative actions that could lessen the effect on conversion, and develop proposals for action to make agency programs compatible with state and local programs to protect farmland.

The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development may provide technical assistance to local governments, nonprofit organizations, and farmland owners that desire to develop programs to limit the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The department, in cooperation with the state Conservation Commission, may also develop educational materials on the importance of productive farmland to Washington's well-being.

The department must submit an annual report to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature on the progress made in implementing this act.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 14, 1998.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.