

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1054

As Passed House:
February 10, 1999

Title: An act relating to the commission on pesticide registration.

Brief Description: Giving direction to the commission on pesticide registration.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives G. Chandler, Linville, Schoesler, Clements, Grant, Anderson, Parlette, Dunshee and Cooper).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 1/21/99, 2/2/99 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/10/99, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the Commission on Pesticide Registration to approve funding for studies on integrated pest management and pesticide resistance management.
- Alters voting requirements for official actions of the commission.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives G.Chandler, Republican Co-Chair; Linville, Democratic Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic Vice Chair; Koster, Republican Vice Chair; Anderson; B.Chandler; Delvin; Fortunato; Grant; Reardon; Schoesler; Stensen; Sump and Wood.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

In general, pesticides are considered to be for minor crops or minor uses in the context of the federal pesticide registration process if the acreage on which the pesticides would potentially be used is "minor" on a national scale. Crops such as apples which are a large part of this state's agricultural economy are considered to be "minor" crops in this national registration context.

The Commission on Pesticide Registration was created by statute in 1995. The statutes creating the commission also dedicate the use of state monies appropriated to Washington State University (WSU) specifically for studies or activities regarding pesticide registrations. The use of these monies must be approved by the commission. The monies may be used for: (1) conducting studies concerning the registration of pesticides for minor crops and minor uses and the availability of pesticides for emergency uses; (2) a program for tracking the availability of pesticides for such crops and uses; and (3) the support of the commission and its activities. Not less than 25 percent of these monies must be dedicated to studies concerning the registration of pesticides for crops which are not among the top 20 agricultural commodities produced in the state.

The commission is made up of 12 voting members appointed by the Governor representing 12 specified segments of the state's agricultural industry. A majority of the voting members constitutes a quorum and an official action of the commission may be taken only by a majority vote of the voting members.

Summary of Bill:

The state appropriations dedicated to use solely by the commission and subject to the laws establishing the commission are those made to or legislatively intended for the commission and those otherwise received by the commission. These appropriations may now expressly be used for evaluations, studies, or investigations approved by the commission for studies regarding research, implementation, and demonstration of integrated pest management and pesticide resistance management programs.

Added to the duties of the commission is the requirement that it encourage agricultural organizations to provide assistance for integrated pest management and pesticide resistance management programs for minor crops and minor uses that would benefit the organizations.

An official action may now be taken by the commission by a majority vote of its quorum, rather than a majority vote of the voting members.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: (Original Bill) (1) This bill is part of WSU's safe food initiative, developed at the request of the agricultural industry of this state. (2) The federal Food Quality Act is rapidly removing chemicals currently used in this state as the tools that may be used to combat pests. These will be replaced by new pesticides and new control strategies. But manufacturers cannot register their products for the very small acreages on which it would be used in this state. The work of the commission is needed for this. (3) The commission has spent two-thirds of its money on research for the "minor-minor" crops, those not in the state's top 20 list. But it has been asked to do biological control studies too. Although the agricultural industry must enhance its biological control programs, it must fund this type of research out-of-state. (4) Integrated pest management should be supported as long as it provides the flexibility to use all types of control approaches in addressing a problem.

(Support with amendments): (1) The commission's broadened mandate and funding for studies under this mandate will help protect consumer health and sustainable agriculture; however, the commission's membership should include organic farming representation to target the studies to biological controls and studies that support sustainable agriculture. (2) Organic agriculture has been growing by 20 percent per year, unlike other sectors of the agricultural industry. The studies supported by this new direction for the commission will provide research into things needed by small farms and this agricultural sector. This type of research helps keep profits on the farm, not in the hands of industry suppliers. (3) New funding for this program should be dedicated to non-chemical alternatives to pest control

Testimony Against: None

Testified: (In Support) Kevin Bouchey, Agricultural Presidents' Group; Randy Smith, Washington Growers Clearinghouse; Barrie Wilcox, Wilcox Farms; Roger Wesselman, Washington Association of Wheat Growers; Bob Berger, Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration; Jim Zuiches, Washington State University; and Dan Coyne, Western Crop Protection Association, Far West Chemicals, and Washington Council of Farmers Cooperatives.

(In Support with amendments): Bonnie Rice, Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network; Anne Swartz, Washington Tilth Producers; and Dawn Vyvyan, Washington Toxics Coalition.