

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6241

C 17 L 02
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Excluding agriculturally cultivated Christmas trees from chapter 76.09 RCW.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & International Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen, T. Sheldon, Swecker, Hargrove and Snyder).

Senate Committee on Agriculture & International Trade
House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology

Background: Christmas trees can be grown on agricultural land or on forest land. Both the Growth Management Act and the property tax statutes differentiate whether land upon which Christmas trees are grown is classified as agricultural land or forest land based on whether the Christmas trees are grown by agricultural methods.

"Agricultural methods" is defined as cultivation of trees that are grown on land prepared by intensive cultivation and tilling, such as irrigating, plowing, or turning over the soil, and on which all unwanted plant growth is controlled continuously for the exclusive purpose of raising trees such as Christmas trees and short-rotation hardwoods.

Currently, Christmas trees are included under the Forest Practices Act and associated rules. For example, the harvest and shearing of Christmas trees are a Class I forest practice and do not require notification to the Department of Natural Resources. Aerial pesticide applications are considered as a Class IV forest practice and require approval by the Department of Natural Resources. Aerial applications must also comply with label restrictions and rules administered by the Department of Agriculture.

Summary: Christmas trees grown by agricultural methods are exempt from the Forest Practices Act. Christmas trees grown by other than agricultural methods remain subject to the Forest Practices Act.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0
House	95	1

Effective: June 13, 2002