
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1416

Brief Description: Extending an asparagus exception to the standards for fruits and vegetables.

Sponsors: Representatives Grant, Chandler, Linville, Newhouse, Warnick and VanDeWege.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the current exception to mandatory grading standards for asparagus shipped out of state for fresh packing to December 31, 2009.

Hearing Date: 2/1/07

Staff: Meg Van Schoorl (786-7105).

Background:

The Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program of the Department of Agriculture (Department) inspects fresh and processed produce such as apples, pears, cherries, peaches, asparagus, and potatoes. The produce is inspected according to uniform grading standards adopted by the Department including maturity, size, soundness, shape, color, condition and other factors important to marketing. The produce may also be certified as free from pests and diseases in order to meet domestic and international market requirements. The Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program is self-supporting through fees-for-service.

The Director of the Department must adopt rules providing uniform grading standards for some fruits and vegetables, and may adopt rules providing uniform grading standards for others. Asparagus is one of the vegetables for which uniform grading standards are required. In 2004, the Legislature approved a temporary exception to these mandatory standards for asparagus shipped out of state for fresh packing, and in 2005, approved a two year extension of the exception . With no grading standards, there are no inspections in Washington. Instead the inspections take place in the state in which the packing occurs. The current exception expires on December 31, 2007.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The current exception to mandatory grading standards for asparagus shipped out of state for fresh packing is extended for two years and will expire on December 31, 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.