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**Community & Economic Development &  
Trade Committee**

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**HB 2153**

**Brief Description:** Regarding an entrepreneurial program known as Washington's economic gardening.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Chase and Kenney.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to develop and provide oversight for the Washington's Economic Gardening Program.

**Hearing Date:** 2/16/09

**Staff:** Chris Cordes (786-7103)

**Background:**

A variety of programs in Washington provide technical assistance to small businesses. Several of these programs are administered by or housed in institutions of higher education. These programs usually function in partnership with various other institutions of higher education, state and federal agencies, and private sector organizations.

For example, the Washington Small Business Development Center (Development Center) at Washington State University has a statutory purpose of providing management and technical assistance, such as training, counseling, and research, to small businesses. The program has business advisor centers, which include adviser center programs at seven community colleges. The program is required to coordinate its activities with other entities to avoid duplication of services. The Development Center is supported with both federal and state funds.

The Washington Technology Center (Technology Center), headquartered at the University of Washington, provides services to companies of all sizes. However, according to its 2008 annual

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report, 87 percent of the companies it served had 10 or fewer employees. Its statutory mandate also includes a small business innovation research program, which gives priority to first-time small business applicants and firms with fewer than 10 employees. The Technology Center is supported with federal and state funds and private donations.

The Washington Grows program, developed by Washington Manufacturing Services, works through the state's economic development organizations to assist businesses to commercialize innovative ideas. Programs may include partnerships with community colleges, cities, business organizations, state agencies, and other related programs such as the Development Center.

**Summary of Bill:**

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) may develop criteria and provide oversight of a program to be known as Washington's Economic Gardening Program (Program). The Program's purpose is to facilitate and coordinate a network of public and private resources to provide assistance, training, and mentoring to small and medium-sized businesses in Washington.

A community college board of trustees may host or participate in a Program by organizing the Program and providing administrative services when funding is appropriated for the program or is available from fees or grants.

A Program is governed by a board of directors that includes representatives of small and medium-sized businesses, the community college's board of trustees, a labor union or council, the SBCTC, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

With approval from the SBCTC and the community college's board of trustees, a Program's board of directors may set fees for program services and enter into necessary contracts. The SBCTC may accept donations to be placed into an account for the Program, and would be responsible for authorizing expenditures from the account.

A Program may:

- assist small and medium-sized businesses to find business management resources;
- develop training targeted to innovative industries or technologies;
- develop entrepreneurial training for small and mid-sized businesses;
- collaborate with governmental, business, and education organizations to integrate entrepreneurial resources; and
- serve as an information clearinghouse.

The SBCTC is required to submit a progress report on the Program to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2010.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 12, 2009.

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