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HOUSE BILL 1974

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By Representatives Shewmake, Blake, Peterson, Walsh, Chandler, Macri, Fitzgibbon, Appleton, Thai, Tharinger, and Riccelli

Read first time 02/08/19. Referred to Committee on Commerce & Gaming.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a Washington state cannabis  
2 commission; amending RCW 42.56.380 and 43.23.033; and adding a new  
3 chapter to Title 15 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The definitions in this section apply  
6 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
7 otherwise.

8 (1) "Board" means the Washington state liquor and cannabis board.

9 (2) "Cannabis" has the meaning provided in RCW 69.50.101 for the  
10 term "marijuana."

11 (3) "Cannabis processor" has the meaning provided in RCW  
12 69.50.101 for the term "marijuana processor."

13 (4) "Cannabis producer" has the meaning provided in RCW 69.50.101  
14 for the term "marijuana producer."

15 (5) "Cannabis product" has the meaning provided in RCW 69.50.101  
16 for the term "marijuana product."

17 (6) "Cannabis retailer" has the meaning provided in RCW 69.50.101  
18 for the term "marijuana retailer."

19 (7) "Commission" means the Washington cannabis commission.

20 (8) "Department" means the department of agriculture.

1 (9) "Director" means the director of the department of  
2 agriculture.

3 (10) "Fiscal year" means the twelve-month period beginning  
4 January 1st of any year and ending December 31st.

5 (11) "Referendum" means a vote by cannabis producers that is  
6 conducted by secret ballot.

7 (12) "Testing laboratory" means an independent, third-party  
8 testing laboratory meeting the accreditation requirements of RCW  
9 69.50.348.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to the referendum conducted  
11 under section 3 of this act, there is created an agricultural  
12 commodity commission to be known as the Washington cannabis  
13 commission.

14 (2)(a) The commission shall be comprised of thirteen voting  
15 members as follows:

16 (i) Eight members must be cannabis producers and must reside in  
17 and be elected from districts as provided in commission rule;

18 (ii) One member must be a cannabis producer from any licensing  
19 tier or district;

20 (iii) One member must be a tier one cannabis producer;

21 (iv) One member must be a tier two cannabis producer;

22 (v) One member must be a tier three cannabis producer; and

23 (vi) One member must be the director or the director's designee.

24 (b) An advisory council must assist the commission and consist of  
25 the following nonvoting members, appointed by the director of the  
26 department upon nomination by the board:

27 (i) One board representative;

28 (ii) One cannabis processor representative;

29 (iii) One cannabis retailer representative; and

30 (iv) One independent testing laboratory representative.

31 (3) Each cannabis producer, cannabis processor, cannabis  
32 retailer, and testing laboratory representative must:

33 (a) Be twenty-one years of age or older and a resident of this  
34 state;

35 (b) Continue to meet all membership qualifications throughout the  
36 member's term; and

37 (c) Be licensed by the board for at least three years before  
38 becoming a commission member.

1 (4) Commission members shall serve three-year terms. Of the  
2 initial members, five must be appointed for a one-year term, five  
3 must be appointed for a two-year term, and the remainder must be  
4 appointed for a three-year term. Thereafter, members must be  
5 appointed for three-year terms.

6 (5) If a position on the commission becomes vacant due to  
7 resignation, disqualification, death, or for any other reason, the  
8 commission must notify the director and the unexpired term must  
9 immediately be filled by appointment by the director.

10 (6) Each member or employee of the commission must be reimbursed  
11 for actual travel expenses incurred in carrying out this chapter as  
12 defined by the commission in rule.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Upon receipt of a petition containing  
14 the signatures of five cannabis producers to implement this chapter  
15 and to determine cannabis producer participation in the commission  
16 and assessment under this chapter, the director shall:

17 (a) Conduct a referendum of cannabis producers. The requirements  
18 of assent or approval of the referendum are met if:

19 (i) At least fifty-one percent by numbers of cannabis producers  
20 participating in the referendum vote affirmatively; and

21 (ii) Thirty percent of the cannabis producers have been  
22 represented in the referendum to determine assent or approval of  
23 participation and assessment. The referendum shall be conducted  
24 within sixty days of receipt of the petition; and

25 (b) Establish a list of cannabis producers from information  
26 provided by the board. In establishing a list of cannabis producers  
27 and their individual production, the director must use the cannabis  
28 producer's name, mailing address, and production by the cannabis  
29 producer in the preceding fiscal year. Information on each cannabis  
30 producer must be mailed to each cannabis producer on record with the  
31 director for verification. All corrections shall be filed with the  
32 director within twenty days from the date of mailing. The list of  
33 cannabis producers shall be kept in a file by the director. The list  
34 shall be certified as a true representation of the referendum mailing  
35 list. Inadvertent failure to notify a cannabis producer does not  
36 invalidate a proceeding conducted under this chapter. The director  
37 must provide the commission the list of cannabis producers after  
38 assent in a referendum as provided in this section.

1 (2) If the director determines that the requisite assent has been  
2 given in the referendum conducted under subsection (1) of this  
3 section, the director must:

4 (a) Within sixty days after assent of the referendum held,  
5 appoint the members of the commission; and

6 (b) Direct the commission to put into force the assessment as  
7 provided for in section 10 of this act.

8 (3) If the director determines that the requisite assent has not  
9 been given in the referendum conducted under subsection (1) of this  
10 section, the director shall take no further action to implement or  
11 enforce this chapter.

12 (4) Upon completion of the referendum conducted under subsection  
13 (1) of this section, the department must tally the results of the  
14 vote and provide the results to the cannabis producers. If a cannabis  
15 producer disputes the results of a vote, that producer within sixty  
16 days from the announced results, shall provide in writing a statement  
17 of why the vote is disputed and request a recount. Once the vote is  
18 tallied and distributed, all disputes are resolved, and all matters  
19 in a vote are finalized, the individual ballots may be destroyed.

20 (5) Before conducting the referendum provided for in subsection  
21 (1) of this section, the director may require the petitioners to  
22 deposit with the director an amount of money as the director deems  
23 necessary to defray the expenses of conducting the referendum. The  
24 director must provide the petitioners an estimate of expenses that  
25 may be incurred to conduct a referendum before any service takes  
26 place. Petitioners must deposit funds with the director to pay for  
27 expenses incurred by the department. The commission must reimburse  
28 petitioners the amount paid to the department when funds become  
29 available. However, if for any reason the referendum process is  
30 discontinued, the petitioners must reimburse the department for  
31 expenses incurred by the department up until the time the process is  
32 discontinued.

33 (6) The director is not required to hold a referendum under  
34 subsection (1) of this section more than once in any twelve-month  
35 period.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Obligations incurred by the commission and  
37 any other liabilities or claims against the commission must be  
38 enforced only against the assets of the commission and, except to the  
39 extent of such assets, no liability for the debts or actions of the

1 commission exists against either the state of Washington or any  
2 subdivision or instrumentality thereof or against any member,  
3 employee, or agent of the commission or the state of Washington in  
4 the person's individual capacity. Except as otherwise provided in  
5 this chapter, neither the commission members, nor its employees, may  
6 be held individually responsible for errors in judgment, mistakes, or  
7 other acts, either of commission or omission, as principal, agent,  
8 person, or employee, except for their own individual acts of  
9 dishonesty or crime. No person or employee may be held individually  
10 responsible for any act or omission of any other commission members.  
11 The liability of the commission members shall be several and not  
12 joint, and no member is liable for the default of any other member.  
13 This section confirms that commission members have been and continue  
14 to be, state officers or volunteers for purposes of RCW 4.92.075 and  
15 are entitled to the defenses, indemnifications, limitations of  
16 liability, and other protections and benefits of chapter 4.92 RCW.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The commission must:

18 (1) Elect a chair and officers. The officers must include a  
19 treasurer who is responsible for all receipts and disbursements by  
20 the commission and the faithful discharge of whose duties must be  
21 guaranteed by a bond at the sole expense of the commission. The  
22 commission must adopt rules for its own governance that provide for  
23 the holding of an annual meeting for the election of officers and the  
24 transaction of other business and for other meetings the commission  
25 may direct;

26 (2) Do all things reasonably necessary to effect the purposes of  
27 this chapter and adopt rules in accordance with this chapter;

28 (3) Employ and discharge managers, secretaries, agents,  
29 attorneys, and employees and engage the services of independent  
30 contractors;

31 (4) Retain, as necessary, the services of private legal counsel  
32 to conduct legal actions on behalf of the commission. The retention  
33 of a private attorney is subject to review by the office of the  
34 attorney general;

35 (5) Participate in international, federal, state, and local  
36 hearings, meetings, and other proceedings relating to the production,  
37 regulation, distribution, sale, or use of cannabis including  
38 activities authorized under RCW 42.17A.635, including the reporting  
39 of those activities to the public disclosure commission;

1 (6) Acquire and transfer personal and real property, establish  
2 offices, incur expenses, and enter into contracts, including  
3 contracts for the creation and printing of promotional literature.  
4 The contracts are not subject to chapter 43.19 RCW, and are  
5 cancelable by the commission unless performed under conditions of  
6 employment that substantially conform to the laws of this state and  
7 the rules of the department of labor and industries. The commission  
8 may create debt and other liabilities that are reasonable for proper  
9 discharge of its duties under this chapter;

10 (7) Maintain accounts with one or more qualified public  
11 depositories as the commission may direct, for the deposit of money,  
12 and expend money for purposes authorized by this chapter by drafts  
13 made by the commission upon such institutions or by other means;

14 (8) Cause to be kept and annually closed, in accordance with  
15 generally accepted accounting principles, accurate records of all  
16 receipts, disbursements, and other financial transactions, available  
17 for audit by the state auditor;

18 (9) Create and maintain a list of producers and disseminate  
19 information among and solicit the opinions of producers with respect  
20 to the discharge of the duties of the commission, directly, or by  
21 arrangement with trade associations or other instrumentalities;

22 (10) Employ, designate as an agent, act in concert with, and  
23 enter into contracts with any person, council, commission, or other  
24 entity to promote the general welfare of the cannabis industry in  
25 Washington state and particularly to assist in the sale and  
26 distribution of Washington cannabis. The commission may expend money  
27 necessary or advisable for this purpose and to pay its proportionate  
28 share of the cost of any program providing direct or indirect  
29 assistance to the sale and distribution of Washington cannabis,  
30 employing and paying for professional services of all kinds;

31 (11) Sue and be sued as a commission, without individual  
32 liability for acts of the commission within the scope of the powers  
33 conferred upon it by this chapter;

34 (12) Serve as liaison with the board on behalf of the commission  
35 and not for any individual cannabis producer; and

36 (13) Receive such gifts, grants, and endowments from public or  
37 private sources as may be made from time to time, in trust or  
38 otherwise, for the use and benefit of the purposes of the commission  
39 and expend the same or any income therefrom according to the terms of  
40 the gifts, grants, or endowments.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 6.**    (1) The commission, before the beginning  
2 of its fiscal year, must prepare and submit to the director for  
3 approval its research plan, its commodity-related education and  
4 training plan, and its budget for that fiscal year.

5        (2) The director must review and make a determination of all  
6 submissions described in this section in a timely manner.

7        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 7.**    The commission exists primarily for the  
8 benefit of the people of the state of Washington and its economy.

9        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 8.**    The commission may create, provide for,  
10 and conduct a comprehensive and extensive research and educational  
11 campaign. It must investigate and ascertain the needs of cannabis  
12 producers and take into account this information in the discharge of  
13 its duties under this chapter.

14       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 9.**    The commission must adopt research and  
15 educational campaign goals directed at cannabis producers that serve  
16 the needs of cannabis producers. The goals may include efforts to:

17        (1) Encourage favorable legislative and regulatory treatment of  
18 Washington cannabis in markets where cannabis is legal;

19        (2) Encourage promotion of Washington agriculture related to  
20 cannabis production in the state; and

21        (3) Foster economic conditions favorable to investment in the  
22 production of Washington cannabis.

23       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 10.**    (1) Pursuant to a referendum under  
24 section 3 of this act, there is levied, and the commission must  
25 collect, upon cannabis produced by a cannabis producer, an annual  
26 assessment on cannabis and cannabis products. The commission must  
27 establish assessment methodology and amounts in rule.

28        (2) The commission shall adopt rules prescribing the time, place,  
29 and method for payment and collection of the assessment and provide  
30 for the collection of assessments from producers who ship directly  
31 out-of-state.

32        (3) The commission must develop a reporting system to document  
33 that the producers in this state are reporting quantities of cannabis  
34 produced and are paying the assessment as provided in this section.

1        NEW SECTION.        **Sec. 11.**        The commission must deposit money  
2 collected under section 10 of this act in a separate account in the  
3 name of the commission in any bank that is a state depository. All  
4 expenditures and disbursements made from this account under this  
5 chapter may be made without appropriation. RCW 43.01.050 does not  
6 apply to this account or to the money received, collected, or  
7 expended as provided in this chapter.

8        NEW SECTION.        **Sec. 12.**        An assessment levied in an amount  
9 determined by the commission under section 10 of this act constitutes  
10 a personal debt of every person assessed or who otherwise owes the  
11 assessment, and the assessment is due and payable to the commission  
12 when payment is called for by the commission. If a producer fails to  
13 pay the commission the full amount of the assessment by the date due,  
14 the commission may add to the unpaid assessment an amount not  
15 exceeding ten percent of the assessment to defray the cost of  
16 enforcing its collection. If the person fails to pay an assessment,  
17 the commission may bring a civil action for collection against the  
18 person or persons in a court of competent jurisdiction. The action  
19 shall be tried and judgment rendered as in any other cause of action  
20 for a debt due and payable.

21        NEW SECTION.        **Sec. 13.**        (1) Under RCW 42.56.380, certain  
22 agricultural business records, commission records, and department of  
23 agriculture records relating to the commission and producers of  
24 agricultural commodities are exempt from public disclosure. However,  
25 financial and commercial information and records submitted to either  
26 the department or the commission for the purpose of administering  
27 this chapter may be shared between the department and the commission.  
28 They may also be used, if required, in any suit or administrative  
29 hearing involving this chapter.

30        (2) This section does not prohibit:  
31        (a) The issuance of general statements based upon the reports of  
32 cannabis producers subject to this chapter as long as the statements  
33 do not identify a specific cannabis producer or licensee; or  
34        (b) The publication by the director or the commission of the name  
35 of a cannabis producer violating this chapter and a statement of the  
36 manner of the violation by that cannabis producer.



1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 14.**    All costs incurred by the department,  
2 including the adoption of rules and other actions necessary to carry  
3 out this chapter, must be reimbursed by the commission under RCW  
4 43.23.033. The commission must provide funds to the department  
5 according to the rules adopted by the director.

6        **Sec. 15.**    RCW 42.56.380 and 2018 c 170 s 1 and 2018 c 106 s 11  
7 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

8        The following information relating to agriculture and livestock  
9 is exempt from disclosure under this chapter:

10        (1) Business-related information under RCW 15.86.110;

11        (2) Information provided under RCW 15.54.362;

12        (3) Production or sales records required to determine assessment  
13 levels and actual assessment payments to commodity boards and  
14 commissions formed under chapters 15.24, 15.26, 15.28, 15.44, 15.65,  
15 15.66, 15.74, 15.88, 15.115, 15.100, 15.89, 15.--- (the new chapter  
16 created in section 17 of this act), and 16.67 RCW or required by the  
17 department of agriculture to administer these chapters or the  
18 department's programs;

19        (4) Consignment information contained on phytosanitary  
20 certificates issued by the department of agriculture under chapters  
21 15.13, 15.49, and 15.17 RCW or federal phytosanitary certificates  
22 issued under 7 C.F.R. 353 through cooperative agreements with the  
23 animal and plant health inspection service, United States department  
24 of agriculture, or on applications for phytosanitary certification  
25 required by the department of agriculture;

26        (5) Financial and commercial information and records supplied by  
27 persons (a) to the department of agriculture for the purpose of  
28 conducting a referendum for the potential establishment of a  
29 commodity board or commission; or (b) to the department of  
30 agriculture or commodity boards or commissions formed under chapter  
31 15.24, 15.28, 15.44, 15.65, 15.66, 15.74, 15.88, 15.115, 15.100,  
32 15.89, 15.--- (the new chapter created in section 17 of this act), or  
33 16.67 RCW with respect to domestic or export marketing activities or  
34 individual producer's production information;

35        (6) Information obtained regarding the purchases, sales, or  
36 production of an individual American ginseng grower or dealer, except  
37 for providing reports to the United States fish and wildlife service  
38 under RCW 15.19.080;

1 (7) Information collected regarding packers and shippers of  
2 fruits and vegetables for the issuance of certificates of compliance  
3 under RCW 15.17.140(2) and 15.17.143;

4 (8) Financial statements obtained under RCW 16.65.030(1)(d) for  
5 the purposes of determining whether or not the applicant meets the  
6 minimum net worth requirements to construct or operate a public  
7 livestock market;

8 (9) Information submitted by an individual or business to the  
9 department of agriculture under the requirements of chapters 16.36,  
10 16.57, and 43.23 RCW for the purpose of herd inventory management for  
11 animal disease traceability. This information includes animal  
12 ownership, numbers of animals, locations, contact information,  
13 movements of livestock, financial information, the purchase and sale  
14 of livestock, account numbers or unique identifiers issued by  
15 government to private entities, and information related to livestock  
16 disease or injury that would identify an animal, a person, or  
17 location. Disclosure to local, state, and federal officials is not  
18 public disclosure. This exemption does not affect the disclosure of  
19 information used in reportable animal health investigations under  
20 chapter 16.36 RCW once they are complete;

21 (10) Results of testing for animal diseases from samples  
22 submitted by or at the direction of the animal owner or his or her  
23 designee that can be identified to a particular business or  
24 individual;

25 (11) Records of international livestock importation that can be  
26 identified to a particular animal, business, or individual received  
27 from the United States department of homeland security or the United  
28 States department of agriculture that are not disclosable by the  
29 federal agency under federal law including 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552;

30 (12) Records related to the entry of prohibited agricultural  
31 products imported into Washington state or that had Washington state  
32 as a final destination received from the United States department of  
33 homeland security or the United States department of agriculture that  
34 are not disclosable by the federal agency under federal law including  
35 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552; (~~and~~)

36 (13) Information obtained from the federal government or others  
37 under contract with the federal government or records obtained by the  
38 department of agriculture, in accordance with RCW 15.135.100; and

1 (14) Hop grower lot numbers and laboratory results associated  
2 with the hop grower lot numbers where this information is used by the  
3 department of agriculture to issue export documents.

4 **Sec. 16.** RCW 43.23.033 and 2009 c 33 s 38 are each amended to  
5 read as follows:

6 (1) The director may provide by rule for a method to fund staff  
7 support for all commodity boards and commissions if a position is not  
8 directly funded by the legislature.

9 (2) Staff support funded under this section, RCW 15.65.047(1)(c),  
10 15.66.055(3), 15.24.215, 15.26.265, 15.28.320, 15.44.190, 15.88.180,  
11 15.89.150, section 14 of this act, and 16.67.190, and chapter 15.115  
12 RCW shall be limited to one-half full-time equivalent employee for  
13 all commodity boards and commissions.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 17.** Sections 1 through 14 of this act  
15 constitute a new chapter in Title 15 RCW.

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