

RCW 15.155.005 Findings—Intent. (1) The legislature finds that Washington is one of only five states in the nation without a state program to help food and agricultural producers promote their products based on where the product is grown, raised, or caught. The legislature further finds that a location-based promotion program will help consumers support Washington producers and the state's agricultural economy by building upon Washington's strong reputation for characteristics like food quality and food safety, which are key factors in consumer purchasing decisions.

(2) The legislature recognizes that recent food policy forum reports to the legislature recommend creation of a program to promote Washington food and agricultural products, and that such a location-based brand recognition program would help identify Washington products for procurement by schools and other public institutions and would provide strong marketing tools to help differentiate Washington products, making them more visible to consumers and more competitive in the local, state, regional, national, and international marketplace. The legislature further recognizes that a new program is needed because a previous promotion program, which was formally dissolved in 2008 and was based primarily on one-time federal funding, did not provide a sustainable structure or a statutory framework that was suitable for most Washington food and agricultural producers.

(3) The legislature therefore intends that the Washington department of agriculture gather advisory committee input and submit recommendations to the legislature prior to developing a location-based promotion program that is voluntary, sustainable, and suitable for Washington food and agricultural producers. The legislature further intends that this program provide support for food producers across the state in a manner that is equitable and inclusive of all scales of Washington agriculture including, but not limited to, serving historically underrepresented producers, producers from less resourced geographies, and producers with less access to support systems and funding. [2023 c 276 § 1.]