

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2062

As Passed House

March 13, 1997

Title: An act relating to seed crop standards.

Brief Description: Authorizing the establishment of seed crop standards.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives Linville, Chandler, Gardner, Mastin and Grant).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 3/3/97 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/13/97, 94-1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Chandler, Chairman; Parlette, Vice Chairman; Schoesler, Vice Chairman; Linville, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cooper; Delvin; Koster; Mastin and Regala.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Sump.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: Agricultural commodity commissions may be created under marketing orders or agreements adopted under the Agricultural Enabling Acts of 1955 or 1961. Under the 1955 act, the director of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) preliminarily approves a proposed marketing order and submits it by referendum to affected parties. If the affected parties approve the referendum, the director adopts the marketing order. Such a marketing order may be for conducting programs for advertising and sales promotion; carrying out research studies to find more efficient methods of production, processing, handling and marketing of agricultural commodity; establishing labeling requirements; and/or investigating and taking action to prevent unfair trade practices.

Legislation enacted in 1986 gave the director of the DOA regulatory authority over the production of rapeseed (canola) by variety and geographical location. This authority is granted until such time as a rapeseed commodity commission is created to assume that regulatory authority.

Summary of Bill: The purposes for which a marketing order may be adopted under the Agricultural Enabling Act of 1955 are expanded. Such an order may be for maintaining the purity and availability of agricultural seeds by establishing appropriate standards for sanitation and geographic isolation. A commodity commission created under such a marketing order may adopt and enforce implementing rules providing isolation between seed crops and other crops susceptible to cross pollination or infection with diseases known to infect the seed crop. The rules may provide for the creation of a specific geographical area where the production of such other crops are restricted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The production of some crops, such as seed potatoes, depends on isolation. The specifications for these allow zero tolerance for cross pollination. Seed potatoes are susceptible to cross pollination from a crop of production potatoes and susceptible to diseases from commercially produced potatoes and other crops. The crop has been grown in Whatcom County, away from potato production areas, but growers there fear that incompatible crops may be introduced to the area. The bill will allow a commodity commission to set isolation requirements.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mike Schwisow, Washington State Seed Potato Commission (pro).