

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2657

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to agricultural products purchased for state institutions and state-supported facilities.

Brief Description: Encourages the purchase of Washington grown commodities by state and local agencies.

Sponsors: By Representatives Hunt, Armstrong, Linville, Schoesler, O'Brien, Holmquist, Chase, Roach, Ogden, Clements, Cox, Mulliken, Barlean, Sehlin, Conway and Rockefeller.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/5/02, 2/8/02 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/17/02, 94-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/8/02, 45-0.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 3/11/02, 94-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Encourages state and local agencies to purchase Washington fruit, vegetables, and agricultural products when available.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Romero, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; McDermott, Schindler, Schmidt and Upthegrove.

Staff: Bree Ramage (786-7617).

Background:

The director of the Department of General Administration (GA), through the state

purchasing and material control director, purchases material, supplies, services and equipment needed for use in state institutions, colleges and departments. Alternatively, an agency may purchase material, supplies, services, and equipment directly from a vendor if the agency notifies the purchasing and material control director that it is more cost-effective. The purchasing and material control director may also delegate to state agencies authorization to purchase or sell materials, supplies, services, and equipment, within a specified dollar amount.

With some exceptions and to the extent feasible, all purchases and sales must be based on competitive bids following a formal sealed bid procedure.

Washington law requires that the state exercise reciprocity with those states having in-state preferences. The GA director must compile a list of each state's statutes and regulations creating preferences to vendors located within that state or goods manufactured within that state. The director must adopt rules to exercise reciprocity in bidding between Washington and those states granting preferences to in-state vendors and goods. Through policy and procedures, the GA has established a schedule of penalties applicable against firms submitting bids from states which grant a preference to their own in-state businesses.

Summary of Bill:

The director of the GA, through the state purchasing and material control director, must encourage state and local agencies to purchase Washington fruit, vegetables, and agricultural products when available.

GA must work with the Department of Agriculture and other interested parties to identify and recommend strategies to increase public purchasing of Washington fruit, vegetables, and agricultural products, and report back to the Legislature in September 2002 and January 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This is a good bill for local industry. It would be a great thing for the state of Washington to be one of Washington agriculture's best customers. The plight of American farmers is having a huge impact on lost agricultural land. When land is no longer used for agriculture it does not return to a natural state, but instead it ends up developed and, as a result, the people suffer a huge environmental, historical, cultural,

and economic loss in their communities. This is something that can be done locally to help farmers, particularly smaller farmers that rely on domestic markets more than the larger farmers. This sends a message to growers that Washington cares about them. Ten other states have similar programs.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Hunt, prime sponsor; Wisten Aldrich, Washington State Farm Bureau; Don Stuart, American Farmland Trust; Eric Houlbout, Washington State Department of Agriculture; Charlie Brown, Washington State Potato Commission; and Steve Stuart, 1000 Friends of Washington.