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**HOUSE BILL 1552**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Reeves, Ramel, Springer, Gregerson, Fosse, and Doglio

AN ACT Relating to directing the state conservation commission to conduct a study of urban agricultural opportunities and barriers in the state; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Urban agriculture provides critical economic development, food access, and educational opportunities in local communities. Community gardens give people access to grow their own food and urban farms create jobs, provide fresh food, and expose future farmers to career development. Innovative farming techniques are being developed to grow more food on less space. However, challenges including access to land, water, and expertise limit urban agriculture's potential. Encouraging urban agriculture requires an understanding of the barriers to success.

(2) The Washington state food policy forum found in its December 2022 report, "*Land Use Policy Solutions to Stem Agricultural Land Loss*," that just as cities establish parks and open space to maintain livable communities, opportunities to grow food also enhance the livability of urban places. A review of the opportunities and barriers to urban agriculture will support local governments as they plan for the future of their communities.

(3) In the December 2022 report, the Washington state food policy forum reached the following consensus recommendation: Increase access to fresh food by supporting urban, peri-urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production, directing the office of farmland preservation to conduct a stakeholder review of the opportunities and barriers.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The state conservation commission shall conduct a study of urban agricultural opportunities and barriers in the state.

(2) The study must examine, at a minimum:

(a) How urban agriculture can provide critical economic development, food access, and education opportunities in local communities;

(b) Opportunities within urban agriculture, such as community gardens and urban farms, to give people access to grow their own food and create jobs, provide fresh food, and expose future farmers to career development;

(c) How urban agriculture can also support local objectives relating to green infrastructure, low-impact development, and climate resilience;

(d) Challenges, including access to land, water, and expertise, that limit the potential of urban agriculture;

(e) Successes and lessons learned from program and policy implementation by local governments and conservation districts; and

(f) Identification of potential pilot programs and requisite funding needs.

(3) In conducting the study, the state conservation commission shall collaborate with the following:

(a) The department of agriculture;

(b) The University of Washington;

(c) Washington State University;

(d) The food policy forum; and

(e) Other stakeholders as deemed appropriate by the state conservation commission.

(4) The state conservation commission must submit the results of the study to the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over agricultural issues by June 30, 2024.

(5) This section expires December 31, 2024.

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