H-2943.1

HOUSE BILL 2525

State of Washington 69th Legislature 2026 Regular Session

By Representatives Mendoza, Springer, Corry, Dufault, Leavitt, Ley, Ybarra, Bernbaum, Chase, Parshley, Manjarrez, Barnard, Macri, Eslick, and Nance

Read first time 01/16/26. Referred to Committee on Postsecondary Education & Workforce.

AN ACT Relating to establishing the heritage orchard program; adding a new section to chapter 28B.30 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the apple is intertwined with the history of Washington and the United States. American propagation of apples began as early as the 1600s and by 1900, there were approximately 20,000 known varieties of apples across North America.

(2) The legislature further finds that:

(a) Since 1900, half of North America's known apple varieties have become extinct; and

(b) Dedicated Washingtonians have discovered at least 29 varieties of apples previously thought to be extinct. Such "lost apples" are often located in small orchards originally planted on homesteads or other family farms.

(3) It is, therefore, the intent of the legislature to create a heritage orchard program to support the conservation of rare apple varieties and to preserve this element of Washington's history.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.30 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Washington State University shall establish a heritage orchard program. At minimum, the heritage orchard program must:

(a) Maintain a registry of heritage orchards in Washington;

(b) Provide resources to preserve heritage orchards;

(c) Propagate rare and lost apple cultivars for backyard and commercial production; and

(d) Develop and maintain a list of rare and lost apple varieties.

(2) For the purposes of this section, "heritage orchard" means:

(a) An orchard with at least five apple trees that are more than 74 years old; or

(b) At least one tree of a rare or lost apple variety, as defined by the heritage orchard program.

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