

WSR 24-17-032
PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
[Filed August 12, 2024, 1:03 p.m.]

Subject of Possible Rule Making: The department of agriculture (department) is considering establishing a quarantine of untreated out-of-state firewood to prevent the introduction of plant pests and bee pests.

Statutes Authorizing the Agency to Adopt Rules on this Subject: RCW 17.24.041.

Reasons Why Rules on this Subject may be Needed and What They Might Accomplish: The movement of firewood containing plant pests and bee pests poses a threat to Washington's forests, agricultural, and environmental interests. Eggs, larvae, and adult stages of many invasive insect pests can be carried on or inside firewood and are easily spread when firewood is moved from one location to another. Introductions of these invasive insect pests have destroyed forests and are costly to control. Such invasive plant pests include emerald ash borer, spongy moth, Asian longhorned beetle, spotted lanternfly, pine wood nematode, Sirex woodwasp, Japanese cedar longhorn beetle, and other insects and organisms that can directly or indirectly injure or cause disease or damage in plants or parts of plants or in processed, manufactured, or other products of plants, or that can be considered bee pests. Many states, including Oregon, have already enacted firewood quarantines that prohibit out-of-state firewood that has not been properly heat-treated against pest organisms. These quarantines seek to prevent potentially infested firewood from entering the state and introducing invasive plant pests and bee pests. This firewood quarantine is necessary to disrupt a dispersal pathway for several invasive plant pests, especially wood-boring insects, and will help prevent their introduction into Washington.

Other Federal and State Agencies that Regulate this Subject and the Process Coordinating the Rule with These Agencies: The department will contact the United States Department of Agriculture, as well as the United States Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection prior to implementation of this rule.

Process for Developing New Rule: Department staff will discuss any proposed amendments with affected stakeholder groups. Affected stakeholders will also have an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposed rules during the public comment period and will be able to present oral testimony at the public hearings.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting Sven Spichiger, Pest Program Manager, Plant Protection Division, Washington State Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560, phone 360-280-6327, TTY 800-833-6388 or 711, email SSpichiger@agr.wa.gov, website <https://agr.wa.gov/services/rulemaking>; or Greg Haubrich, Assistant Director, Plant Protection Division, Washington State Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560, phone 360-902-2071, TTY 800-833-6388 or 711, email ghaubrich@agr.wa.gov, website <https://agr.wa.gov/services/rulemaking>.

August 8, 2024
Greg Haubrich
Assistant Director