

WSR 25-01-160

EXPEDITED RULES

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

[Filed December 18, 2024, 10:40 a.m.]

Title of Rule and Other Identifying Information: Chapter 16-557 WAC, Washington asparagus commission.

Purpose of the Proposal and Its Anticipated Effects, Including Any Changes in Existing Rules: In response to a petition for rule making, the department of agriculture (department) is proposing to clarify current rule language by replacing all gender-specific pronouns with modern gender-inclusive pronouns.

Reasons Supporting Proposal: RCW 43.01.160 requires state agencies to use gender-neutral terms in rules unless a specification of gender is intended. Replacing gender-specific terminology supports the department's commitment to integrate inclusive policies and procedures.

Gender-inclusive pronouns are pronouns that are not specifically gendered and can be utilized when referring to each other in the third person. They are linguistic tools that we use to refer to people. Using gender-neutral pronouns can help create a more inclusive and welcoming environment and show respect for people's gender identities.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 43.23.025.

Statute Being Implemented: Chapter 15.65 RCW.

Rule is not necessitated by federal law, federal or state court decision.

Name of Proponent: Washington asparagus commission, governmental.

Name of Agency Personnel Responsible for Drafting: Megan Finkenbinder, 1111 Washington Street S.E., Olympia, 360-902-1887; Implementation and Enforcement: Alan Schreiber, 2621 Ringold Road, Eltopia, 509-266-4300.

This notice meets the following criteria to use the expedited adoption process for these rules:

Corrects typographical errors, makes address or name changes, or clarifies language of a rule without changing its effect.

Explanation of the Reason the Agency Believes the Expedited Rule-Making Process is Appropriate: Expedited process is appropriate due to it being name changes and no impact to rule effects.

NOTICE

THIS RULE IS BEING PROPOSED UNDER AN EXPEDITED RULE-MAKING PROCESS THAT WILL ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR THE AGENCY TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS, PREPARE A SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT, OR PROVIDE RESPONSES TO THE CRITERIA FOR A SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATIVE RULE. IF YOU OBJECT TO THIS USE OF THE EXPEDITED RULE-MAKING PROCESS, YOU MUST EXPRESS YOUR OBJECTIONS IN WRITING AND THEY MUST BE SENT TO Megan Finkenbinder, Washington State Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504, phone 360-902-1887, fax 360-902-2092, email mfinkenbinder@agr.wa.gov, BEGINNING January 2, 8:00 a.m., AND RECEIVED BY February 18, 11:59 p.m.

December 18, 2024
Derek I. Sandison
Director

OTS-6046.1

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 18-21-182, filed 10/24/18, effective 11/24/18)

WAC 16-557-010 Definition of terms. For the purpose of this marketing order:

"Act" means the Washington Agricultural Enabling Act of 1961 or chapter 15.65 RCW.

"Affected area" means the entire state of Washington.

"Affected handler" means both affected handler fresh and affected handler processor.

"Affected handler, fresh" means any person who acts as principal or agent or otherwise in selling, marketing, or distributing fresh asparagus not produced by (~~him/her~~) them.

"Affected handler, processor" means any person who acts as principal or agent or otherwise in processing, freezing asparagus, and selling, marketing, or distributing said processed or frozen asparagus, not produced by (~~him/her~~) them.

"Affected producer" means any person who produces in the state of Washington asparagus in commercial quantities for fresh market, for processing, or for sale to processors.

"Affected unit" means one pound net pay weight of asparagus.

"Asparagus" means and includes all kinds, varieties, and hybrids of "*officinalis*" Linn.

"Asparagus commodity board," hereinafter referred to as "board," means the commodity board formed under the provisions of WAC 16-557-020.

"Commercial quantity" means any asparagus produced for market in quantities of three tons (6,000 pounds) or more, in any calendar year.

"Department" means the department of agriculture of the state of Washington.

"Director" means the director of agriculture of the state of Washington or (~~his~~) the director's duly appointed representative.

"Hosting" may include providing meals, refreshments, lodging, transportation, gifts of a nominal value, reasonable and customary entertainment, and normal incidental expenses at meetings or gatherings.

"Marketing season" or "fiscal year" means the (~~twelve~~) 12-month period beginning with January 1st of any year and ending with the last day of December following, both dates being inclusive.

"Person" means any person, firm, association, or corporation.

"Promotional hosting" as used in these rules means the hosting of individuals and groups of individuals at meetings, meals, and gatherings for the purpose of cultivating trade relations and promoting sales of Washington grown asparagus.

"Sell" includes offer for sale, expose for sale, have in possession for sale, exchange, barter, or trade.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 18-21-182, filed 10/24/18, effective 11/24/18)

WAC 16-557-020 Asparagus commodity board. (1) Administration. The provisions of this order and the applicable provisions of the act

shall be administered and enforced by the board as the designee of the director.

(2) **Board membership.**

(a) The board shall consist of nine members. Six members shall be affected producers elected as provided in this section, one member shall be an affected handler, fresh, elected as provided in this section, one member shall be an affected handler processor, as provided in this section. The director shall appoint one member who is neither an affected producer nor a handler to represent the department and the public.

(b) Effective January 1, 2002, for the purpose of nomination and election of producer members of the board, the affected area shall be that portion of the state of Washington located east of the summit of the Cascade Mountains and shall be divided into three representative districts as follows:

(i) District I shall have two board members, being positions one and two, and shall be Benton, Kittitas, Klickitat, and Yakima counties and counties in western Washington.

(ii) District II shall have three board members, being positions three, four, and five, and shall include the counties of Adams, Columbia, Franklin, Grant, and Walla Walla counties and remaining counties in eastern Washington not in District I.

(iii) Position six will become an at large position in the state of Washington.

(3) **Board membership qualifications.**

(a) The affected producer members of the board shall be practical producers of asparagus and shall be citizens and residents of the state of Washington, must be at least (~~twenty-one~~) 21 years of age, each of whom is and has been, either individually or as an officer or an employee of a corporation, firm, partnership, association, or cooperative, actually engaged in producing asparagus within the state of Washington for a period of five years and has, during that time, derived a substantial portion of (~~his~~) their income therefrom.

(b) The affected handler member of the board shall be a practical handler of asparagus and shall be a citizen and resident of the state of Washington, who is and has been, either individually or as an officer or an employee of a corporation, firm, partnership association or cooperative actually engaged in handling asparagus within the state of Washington for a period of five years and has during that period derived a substantial portion of (~~his~~) their income therefrom.

(c) The qualifications of members of the board must continue during their term of office.

(4) **Term of office.**

(a) The term of office, for members of the board shall be three years, and one-third of the membership as nearly as possible shall be elected each year.

(b) Membership positions on the board shall be designated numerically; affected producers shall have positions one through six, affected handler member fresh product, position seven, affected handler member, processor, position eight, and the member appointed by the director, position nine.

(5) **Nomination and election of board members.** For the purpose of nominating candidates for election to board membership, the director shall call separate meetings of affected producers, affected handlers, fresh and affected handler processors. Each year the director shall call for nomination meetings in those districts whose board members' term is about to expire. Such meetings shall be held at least (~~thir-~~

~~ty~~) 30 days in advance of the date set by the director for the election of board members. Notice of every such meeting shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the affected area not less than (~~ten~~) 10 days in advance of the date of such meeting; and, in addition, written notice of every such meeting shall be given to all affected producers within the affected area and all affected handlers according to the list maintained by the director pursuant to RCW 15.65.200 of the act. Nonreceipt of notice by any interested person shall not invalidate the proceedings at such nomination meeting. Any qualified affected producer or affected handler may be nominated orally for membership on the board at such nomination meeting. Nominations may also be made within five days after any such meeting by written petition filed with the director, signed by not less than five affected producers or affected handlers. At the inception of this order, nominations may be made at the issuance hearing.

If the board moves and the director approves that the nomination meeting procedure be deleted, the director shall give notice of the vacancy by mail to all affected producers or handlers. Nominating petitions for producers shall be signed by not less than five affected producers of the district from which such a candidate will be elected. Nomination petitions for handlers, fresh and processed shall be signed by not less than three affected handlers. The final date for filing nominations which shall not be less than (~~twenty~~) 20 days after the notice was mailed.

(6) Election of board members.

(a) Members of the board shall be elected by secret mail ballot within the month of November under the supervision of the director. Affected producer members of the board shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast by the affected producers within the affected district. Each affected producer within the affected district shall be entitled to one vote.

Affected handler, fresh, shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast by the affected handlers, fresh. Affected handler, processor, shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast by the affected handlers, processor.

(b) If a nominee does not receive a majority of the votes on the first ballot, a run-off election shall be held by mail in a similar manner between the two candidates for such position receiving the largest number of votes.

(c) Notice of every election for board membership shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the affected area not less than (~~ten~~) 10 days in advance of the date of such election. Not less than (~~ten~~) 10 days prior to every election for board membership, the director shall mail a ballot of the candidates to each affected producer or affected handler entitled to vote whose name appears on the list of such affected producers and affected handler within the affected area maintained by the director in accordance with RCW 15.65.200. Any other affected producer or affected handler entitled to vote may obtain a ballot by application to the director upon establishing (~~his~~) their qualifications. Nonreceipt of a ballot by any affected producer shall not invalidate the election of any board members.

(7) Vacancies prior to election. In the event of a vacancy on the board, the remaining members shall select a qualified person to fill the unexpired term.

(8) **Quorum.** A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business and the carrying out of all duties of the board.

(9) **Board compensation.** No member of the board shall receive any salary or other compensation, but each member may receive (~~thirty-five dollars~~) \$35 or an amount as provided for in RCW 43.03.230 for each day in actual attendance at or traveling to and from meetings of the board or on special assignment for the board, together with travel expenses at the rates allowed state employees.

(10) **Powers and duties of the board.** The board shall have the following powers and duties:

(a) To administer, enforce, and control the provisions of this order as the designee of the director.

(b) To elect a chairman and such other officers as the board deems advisable.

(c) To employ and discharge at its discretion such personnel as the board determines necessary and proper to carry out the purpose of the order and effectuate the declared policies of the act.

(d) To pay only from moneys collected as assessments or advances thereon the costs arising in connection with the formulation, issuance, administration, and enforcement of the order. Such expenses and costs may be paid by check, draft, or voucher in such form and in such manner and upon the signature of the person as the board may prescribe.

(e) To reimburse any applicant who has deposited with the director in order to defray the costs of formulating the order.

(f) To establish an "asparagus board marketing revolving fund" and such fund to be deposited in a bank or banks or financial institution or institutions, approved for the deposit of state funds, in which all money received by the board, except for an amount of petty cash for each days' needs, not to exceed (~~fifty dollars~~) \$50, shall be deposited daily.

(g) To keep or cause to be kept in accordance with accepted standards of good accounting practice, accurate records of all assessments, paid outs, moneys, and other financial transactions made and done pursuant to this order. Such records, books, and accounts shall be audited subject to procedures and methods lawfully prescribed by the state auditor. Such books and accounts shall be closed as of the last day of each fiscal year. A copy of such audit shall be delivered within (~~thirty~~) 30 days after the completion thereof to the governor, the director, the state auditor, and the board.

(h) To require a bond of all board members and employees of the board in a position of trust in the amount the board shall deem necessary. The premium for such bond or bonds shall be paid by the board from assessments collected. Such bond shall not be necessary if any such board member or employee is covered by any blanket bond covering officials or employees of the state of Washington.

(i) To prepare a budget or budgets covering anticipated income and expenses to be incurred in carrying out the provisions of the order during each fiscal year.

(j) To establish by resolution, a headquarters which shall continue as such unless and until so changed by the board. All records, books, and minutes of board meetings shall be kept at such headquarters.

(k) To adopt rules and regulations of a technical or administrative nature, subject to the provisions of chapter 34.05 RCW (Administrative Procedure Act).

(l) To carry out the provisions of RCW 15.65.510 covering the obtaining of information necessary to effectuate the provisions of the order and the act.

(m) To bring actions or proceedings, upon joining the director as a party, for specific performance, restraint, injunction, or mandatory injunction against any person who violates or refuses to perform the obligations or duties imposed upon ~~((him))~~ them by the act or the order.

(n) To confer with and cooperate with the legally constituted authorities of other states and of the United States for the purpose of obtaining uniformity in the administration of federal and state marketing regulations, licenses, agreements, or orders.

(o) To carry out any other grant of authority or duty provided designees and not specifically set forth in this section.

(p) To authorize the members of a commodity board, or their agents or designees, to participate in federal or state hearings or other proceedings concerning regulation of the manufacture, distribution, sale, or use of any pesticide as defined by RCW 15.38.030(1) or any agricultural chemical which is of use or potential use in producing the affected commodity, and may authorize the expenditure of commission funds for this purpose.

(11) Procedures for board.

(a) The board shall hold regular meetings, at least quarterly, and such meetings shall be held in accordance with chapter 42.30 RCW (Open Public Meetings Act).

(b) The board shall hold an annual meeting, at which time an annual report will be presented. The budget shall be presented for discussion at the meeting. In addition to such notice as may be required by chapter 42.30 RCW, notice of the annual meeting shall be given by the board at least ~~((ten))~~ 10 days prior to the meeting by written notice to each producer, and handler and by regular news service.

(c) In accordance with RCW 42.30.080, the board shall establish by resolution, the time, place, and manner of calling special meetings of the board with reasonable notice to the members: Provided, that the notice of any special meeting may be waived by a waiver thereof by each member of the board.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 91-09-003, filed 4/4/91, effective 5/5/91)

WAC 16-557-060 Termination of the order. The order shall be terminated if the director finds that ~~((fifty-one))~~ 51 percent by numbers and ~~((fifty-one))~~ 51 percent by volume of production of the affected producers favor or assent to such dissolution. The director may ascertain without compliance with RCW 15.65.050 through 15.65.130 of the act whether such termination is so assented to or favored whenever ~~((twenty))~~ 20 percent by numbers and ~~((twenty))~~ 20 percent by volume of production of the affected producers file written application with ~~((him))~~ the director for such termination. The termination shall not, however, become effective until the expiration of the marketing season.