

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5540

As Passed Senate, March 13, 2003

Title: An act relating to seed testing and certification fees.

Brief Description: Allowing seed testing fees to increase in excess of the fiscal growth factor set out in chapter 43.135 RCW.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture (originally sponsored by Senators Sheahan and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture: 2/11/03, 2/27/03 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/13/03, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5540 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Swecker, Chair; Brandland, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, Rasmussen and Sheahan.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: Initiative 601, approved by voters in November 1993, contains a provision that requires any fee increase in excess of the fiscal growth factor to receive prior legislative approval. The fiscal growth factor is the sum of the percentage increase in inflation plus the percentage increase in the state population.

The current fees for seed inspection and certification are established by rule. The revenue from the fees collected by this program and fees for several other programs administered by the agency are deposited in an account in the agricultural local fund.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Agriculture is authorized to increase fees for laboratory testing and seed certification in excess of the fiscal growth factor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The Seed Inspection and Certification Fund balance has been dropping and revenues have not kept up with increased costs. Additional staff are needed to perform timely inspections so seeds can be delivered when marketing opportunities exist.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Graydon Robinson, Leslie Emerick, WSDA; Brad Boswell, Washington North Idaho Seed Association.