

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6510

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture, February 5, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to farms for the future of Washington.

**Brief Description:** Preserving farms.

**Sponsors:** Senators Swecker, Rasmussen, Haugen and Parlette.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture: 2/5/04 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6510 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:** Efforts are underway to take advantage of potential funding sources that will provide for retention of agricultural lands while also addressing other societal and environmental goals. To retain agricultural lands, it is also important to retain the continued viability of farms.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The farms for the future of Washington account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. Revenues to the account must consist of appropriations made by the Legislature and other federal, regional, local or private funds that are suitable. Funds in the account may not be used to buy lands nor development rights to lands that have not been actively farmed for at least five years, nor to lands that have been divided into residential, commercial, or industrial lots. Only the director of the Department of Agriculture or the director's designee may authorize expenditures from the account. Up to 5 percent of the funds placed in the account may be used for administrative costs. State funds appropriated into the account are subject to allotment procedures but an appropriation is not required.

Any interest that accrues from any monies in the account must also be deposited into the account.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Included in the legislative findings is recognition of the need for land to locate residences and businesses. Funds in the account may not be used to buy lands nor development rights to lands that have not been actively farmed for at least five years, nor to lands that have been divided into residential, commercial, or industrial lots.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The idea of establishing this account came from the growth management work group who is looking at ways to address environmental and fish and wildlife habitat needs without causing a loss of farmland or a loss of viability of those farming these lands.

**Testimony Against:** There is concern that this will further reduce the supply of buildable lands.

**Testified:** Andy Cook, Building Industry Association of Washington (concerns); Dan Wood, Farm Bureau (pro).