
**Economic Development,
Agriculture & Trade Committee**

HB 1593

Brief Description: Funding farmers market nutrition programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville, Clements, Pettigrew, O'Brien, Hasegawa, Grant, Kenney, McDermott, McDonald, Chase, Skinner, Williams, Santos, Schual-Berke and Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Recognizes the benefits of farmers market nutrition programs and appropriates \$1.15 million from the State General Fund to the Departments of Health and Social and Health Services for 2005-07.

Hearing Date: 2/22/05

Staff: Meg Van Schoorl (786-7105).

Background:

Women, Infant, and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP)

The goals of the WIC FMNP are 1) to provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared fruits and vegetables to WIC participants and 2) to expand awareness, use of, and sales of Washington grown produce at farmers markets. The WIC FMNP was begun in cooperation with the Washington State Farmers Market Association in 1989 as a national demonstration project serving 7,000 participants at six farmers markets. In 2004, 33,000 WIC participants bought \$660,000 in Washington grown produce from 591 farmers at 60 farmers markets in 23 counties.

Eligibility for the program is limited to participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Each July, participants receive a packet of vouchers worth \$20 in \$2 increments which can be redeemed at authorized farmers markets for eligible fresh fruit and vegetables through October 31. Authorized growers accept the checks, have them stamped by market staff, and cash them at local banks. WIC clinics provide nutrition education for participants on the selection, storage and preparation of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Department of Health (DOH) administers the WIC FMNP. According to the DOH the 2003-05 budget for WIC FMNP includes \$223,000 in state general funds and \$1.03 million in federal grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). For the 2005-07 biennium, the

WIC FMNP budget includes \$292,000 in state general funds and \$1.64 million in federal grants from the USDA.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

The goals of the SFMNP are 1) to reduce hunger and improve the health and nutritional status of low income seniors by increasing their consumption of fruits and vegetables, and 2) to support small farmers and rural economies through the promotion of Washington agriculture. The program takes place from July through October. Eligible seniors receive a \$40 packet of vouchers in \$2 increments which they can redeem at authorized farmers markets and roadside stands. Local produce is also purchased directly from authorized farmers, farmers markets, stands, and community supported agriculture (CSA) for delivery to homebound seniors, congregate meal sites, food banks, and senior housing. The SFMNP began in 2001. In 2004, approximately 11,200 low-income seniors were served with \$341,000 in Washington grown produce from 540 farmers at 56 markets, 6 roadside stands, and 2 CSAs in 35 counties.

The SFMNP is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services Aging and Disability Services Administration in conjunction with the DOH, eleven Area Agencies on Aging, the Washington State Farmers Market Association, and other organizations.

According to the Washington Association of the Area Agencies on Aging, for fiscal year 2005, there will be a total of \$173,966 available for the SFMNP: \$62,618 remaining from the Attorney General's Office Vitamin Settlement Fund and \$111,348 in federal grants from the USDA. After \$11,000 is set aside for administration, \$162,966 will remain for vouchers. With that level of funding, 4,075 people can be served. For fiscal year 2006 and beyond, no moneys will remain from the Vitamin Settlement Fund for administration. Without state funding for administration, the USDA funding will not be available for the vouchers.

Summary of Bill:

Farmers market nutrition programs are recognized for the health and financial benefits they bring to participants including low-income women and their children, as well as low-income, homebound seniors. These programs are recognized for their support of small farmers and rural economies, preservation of farmlands, reduction in energy use and pollution, and collaboration between agriculture, health, social services, and food assistance programs. Because of federal budget reductions and insufficient state funding, program stakeholders will not have the opportunity to participate in the coming years.

An appropriation of \$400,000 is made from the state general fund to the DOH for the 2005-07 biennium to expand 2004 participation levels for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. An appropriation of \$750,000 is made from the state general fund to the Department of Social and Health Services for the 2005-07 biennium to maintain 2004 participation levels for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Appropriation: The sum of \$1.150 million GF-S for the 2005-2007 biennium.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.