
Commerce & Labor Committee

2ESB 5723

Brief Description: Creating and funding the community agricultural worker safety grant program.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Clements, Hatfield, Roach, Shin, Morton, Kline, Schoesler, Haugen, Sheldon, Hargrove, Kohl-Welles, Fairley, Honeyford, Franklin, Keiser, Berkey, Kauffman, Kilmer, Jacobsen, Kastama, Benton, Zarelli and Parlette.

Brief Summary of Second Engrossed Bill

- Requires the Department of Agriculture, subject to the availability of appropriation, to administer the Community Agricultural Worker Safety Grant Program.
- Provides for the Program to be implemented by the Opportunities Industrialization Center.

Hearing Date: 2/26/08

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106).

Background:

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) carries out more than 25 programs that support the agricultural community and promote consumer and environmental protection. These programs include Animal Health Services, Commodity Inspection, Food Safety and Consumer Services, Pesticide Management, and Plant Protection.

The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) administers and enforces the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA). Under the WISHA, L&I adopts rules governing safety and health standards for workplaces covered by the WISHA, which include standards applicable to the agricultural industry.

The Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, Inc. (OIC) is a national non-profit organization that operates through local affiliated organizations. The OIC Washington affiliate has locations in Mount Vernon, Moses Lake, Pasco, Sunnyside, Ellensburg, Roslyn, Seattle,

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Wenatchee, and Yakima. The OIC provides education and employment support, including farmworker programs.

The 2007-09 operating budget includes \$500,000 to the WSDA for pass-through funding to the OIC to provide training to agricultural workers related to farm skills, English as a second language, and other skills.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative findings are made that agricultural workers face difficulties in upgrading their skills and that the agricultural industry's demand for skilled workers far outnumbers the supply. The Legislature further finds that additional training of agricultural workers should assist in ongoing efforts to reduce agricultural occupational injuries.

Subject to appropriation, the WSDA is directed to administer a Community Agricultural Worker Safety Grant Program to be implemented by the OIC. The OIC must work with the agricultural industry to provide practical, hands-on training for the state's agricultural workers in tractor and farm machinery skills and safety, pesticide training, adult basic skills, civics, English as a second language, commercial drivers' licensing, and other related topics. As grant recipient, the OIC may receive up to \$250,000 per year.

The legislation expires July 1, 2012.

Rules Authority: The bill does not address the rule-making powers of an agency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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