

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5811

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 8, 2007

Title: An act relating to animal identification programs.

Brief Description: Extending an advisory committee to evaluate animal identification programs.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Schoesler, Shin, Morton, Hatfield, Kastama, Sheldon, Swecker, Hargrove and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/05/07, 2/08/07 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5811 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Morton and Shin.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: In 2006, legislation was enacted that directed the Department of Agriculture to convene an advisory committee composed of representatives from the various affected segments of the cattle industry to evaluate the proposed national animal identification program. The national animal identification program was proposed in response to animal disease, bio-terrorism and food safety issues such as hoof and mouth disease, e-coli O15H7, bovine spongiform encepholophy (mad cow disease), and avian influenza. The federal program called for each state to formulate components of the program that would be workable for that state. The Department of Agriculture was directed to work with the cattle industry on that industry's component of the program.

The cattle advisory committee was required to make recommendations on how the program could be implemented for the cattle sector including a recommendation on funding amounts and sources. During the course of the advisory committee's work, the United State Department of Agriculture modified the federal program to make it voluntary.

A report was provided to the 2007 session of the Legislature. This advisory committee undertook a number of cattle related activities and pilot projects. A number of the pilot projects and activities will not be completed by the July 1, 2007, expiration date established in the 2006 legislation.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The advisory committee is extended one additional year until July 1, 2008. The charge to the committee recognizes that the proposed federal program is now voluntary. A written report of the advisory committee's activities and recommendations is to be submitted to the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Agriculture & Rural Economic Development): The emergency clause is removed. The scope of the cattle advisory committee is limited to cattle and does not extend to other species of livestock. The cattle advisory committee shall be reactivated until July 1, 2008 and is to submit a final report on December 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The various sectors of the cattle industry reported on the activities of the cattle advisory committee earlier in the session. This committee still has work to complete on the pilot projects. The one year extension to complete their work is appreciated.

CON: The emergency clause deprives the right of citizens to a referendum. There isn't an immediate disease outbreak so the emergency clause should be stricken. Small farmers oppose a mandatory National Animal Identification Program. There is concern that the cattle advisory committee will make recommendations for livestock species beyond cattle. There is no objection to allowing the cattle advisory committee to finish its work.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Eddie Armstrong, Washington State Horse Council.

CON: Kim Siebert, Valerie Tinney, and Katherine Broderick, citizens; Celeste Bishop, No National Animal Identification System; Emmy McAllister, Weston A. Price Foundation.