

SB 5108-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Finds that there is a finite quantity of high quality agricultural land and that often this agricultural land is mistakenly viewed as an expendable resource.

Finds that the retention of agricultural land is desirable, not only to produce food and other products, but also to maintain our state economy and preferable environmental conditions. For these reasons, and because it is essential that agricultural production be sufficient to meet the needs of our growing population, commitment to the retention of agricultural land should be reflected at the state policy level by the creation of an office of farmland preservation to support the retention of farmland and the viability of farming for future generations.

VETO MESSAGE ON SSB 5108

May 8, 2007

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Sections 6 and 7, Substitute Senate Bill 5108 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to farmland preservation."

This bill creates the Office of Farmland Preservation. Sections 6 and 7 are overly broad and do not appear to be related to the underlying bill, as it prohibits the use of eminent domain by governmental entities for wetland mitigation purposes on agricultural land. Furthermore, if enacted, Sections 6 and 7 create unintended and undesirable consequences to numerous transportation and development projects across the state, including the ability to meet state and federal permit requirements to continue dredging of the lower Columbia River.

I understand that the Army Corp of Engineers, state agencies, Port officials, local legislators and Southwest Washington families are meeting to explore alternatives to condemnation for mitigation related to the Columbia Deepening Project. This is a much more productive avenue than the provisions Sections 6 and 7 provide.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Sections 6 and 7 of Substitute Senate Bill 5108.

With the exception of Sections 6 and 7, Substitute Senate Bill
No. 5108 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine O. Gregoire
Governor