

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 6556

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
General Government Appropriations

**Title:** An act relating to changing fees for certain types of agricultural burning.

**Brief Description:** Changing the fees for certain types of agricultural burning.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Hatfield and Schoesler).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

General Government Appropriations: 2/23/10, 2/25/10 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Increases agricultural burning permit fees charged by the Department of Ecology for field burning and pile burning.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Darneille, Chair; Takko, Vice Chair; McCune, Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Dunshee, Hudgins, Kenney, Klippert, Pedersen, Sells, Short, Van De Wege and Williams.

**Staff:** Owen Rowe (786-7391).

**Background:**

The maximum permit fee for agricultural field burning is set at \$2.50 per acre. This statutory cap was established in 1991. The fee was established at the current level of \$2.25 per acre by the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force in 2008. The revenue from these permit fees are deposited in the Air Pollution Control Account, except for the portion necessary to cover the local cost of administering the permit.

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*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.*

The current fee of \$2.25 per acre is used as follows: \$1.25 is retained by delegated permitting entities; \$0.50 goes toward the Department of Ecology's (DOE) administrative and smoke management activities; and \$0.50 is directed to agricultural burning research. After fees are established by rule, any increase is limited to annual inflation adjustments as determined by the state office of the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The current statutory maximum permit fee of \$2.50 per acre for agricultural field burning is increased to \$3.75 per acre. Additionally, the DOE is given the authority to charge a permit fee for pile burning that is not to exceed \$1 per ton of material burned. Fees continue to be set by rule adopted by the DOE at the level determined by the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force has been an effective work group that regulates the fee increases for agricultural burning permits. The amendment to take out the language that allows fee increases to be increased by a fiscal growth factor has been removed in the Senate version of this bill. This amendment causes agricultural burning permit fees to be more standardized. This change has been agreed to by all stakeholders.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Jim Jeserning, Washington Wheat Growers Conservation Districts.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.