

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5004

As of February 13, 2009

Title: An act relating to creating a mobile custom farm slaughtering unit loan program.

Brief Description: Creating a mobile custom farm slaughtering unit loan program.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Swecker, Ranker and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/19/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: To be sold in groceries and restaurants, meat must be harvested from animals slaughtered at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-regulated facilities.

In recent years, several USDA-regulated livestock slaughtering facilities in Washington have closed, impeding local meat production. Mobile slaughtering units – transportable structures that can travel to farms, and are accompanied by a USDA inspector – have been suggested as a possible solution to this problem. Three mobile slaughtering units are currently operating in Washington, based in Island, Stevens, and Walla Walla counties. The Pierce County Conservation District recently authorized funding for another mobile slaughtering unit, which will be operated by a nonprofit cooperative serving meat producers in Pierce, King, Kitsap, Mason, Thurston, and Lewis counties.

Summary of Bill: The mobile custom farm slaughtering unit loan program is established within the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Conservation districts and other local governments may apply for and receive loans from the state to purchase mobile custom farm slaughtering units for lease to livestock producers.

WSDA, which will administer the program, may approve a loan to a local government only if a proposal will produce long-term economic benefits to a region, county, or community, and will not require continuing state support. Loan agreements must provide for adequate reporting or disclosure of economic benefit data to WSDA and authorize WSDA audits; require that at least 5 percent of the meat annually processed by a funded unit be donated to

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food banks within the area served by the unit; and grant the state an option to purchase a portion of the meat processed by a funded unit.

The measure also specifies terms regarding loan priority funding and suspension, cancellation, and repayment of loans; creates a loan account in the State Treasury, with monies spent only after appropriation; and mandates an annual program status report to the Legislature, with the first report due by December 2010.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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