

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6343

FULL VETO As Passed Legislature

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington food policy forum.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles, Swecker, Haugen, Hatfield and Keiser).

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development
House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Background: Food policy councils (FPCs) have been formed in different regions of the United States. Some are formed by cities, counties, and states and some by nongovernmental organizations. Generally, these councils are comprised from various stakeholders of a local food system. Typically, councils are sanctioned through governmental action such as a Governor's Executive Order, state law, or local ordinance. Some FPCs have formed through grassroots efforts and operate without an official convening document. FPCs often involve innovative collaborations between citizen groups and government officials to give voice to concerns and interests in a range of topics including: food production, nutrition, obesity, hunger, and other food system related issues.

Summary: The Washington Food Policy Forum is established to develop recommendations to advance the following food system goals:

1. increase production, sales, and consumption of Washington-grown foods;
2. develop and promote programs that bring healthy Washington grown foods to its residents, including increased state purchasing of local food products for school, adult care programs, and other state funded food programs;
3. review and develop programs that support proper nutrition and avoid burdens of obesity and chronic diet-related diseases;
4. protect the land and water resources needed for sustained food production;
5. examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number of farmers, education needs for an adequate agricultural workforce and provide for continued economic viability of local food production, processing, and distribution; and
6. reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state and ensure the benefits of a healthy food system is shared with families at all income levels, particularly vulnerable children, the elderly, the disabled, and communities of color.

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 forum has seven agency, two university, and 16 interest group representatives. The state agency and university representatives invited to participate include:

1. the director of the Department of Agriculture;
2. the secretary of the Department of Health;
3. the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
4. the director of the Department of Commerce;
5. the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services;
6. the dean of the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences at Washington State University;
7. the director of the Department of Ecology;
8. the Office of Farmland Preservation; and
9. a representative from the University of Washington who has expertise in food systems or nutrition appointed by its president.

The following public members must be appointed by the director of the Department of Agriculture:

1. five farmer representatives;
2. a food distribution, processing, and marketing representative;
3. a representative of direct-to-consumer marketing;
4. a representative of community-based efforts to address nutrition and public health;
5. a representative who represents nongovernmental statewide anti-hunger efforts;
6. a representative of food banks;
7. a representative of a nongovernmental statewide organization with interest in protection of the state's land, air, and water;
8. a person representing retail grocers;
9. a representative from a labor union that represents workers in the food industry;
10. a representative from the international trade sector with expertise in the trade of food products;
11. a representative of the restaurant sector; and
12. a representative from the commercial fishing sector.

The chair of the forum will be elected by the members. At the first meeting the forum must elect a chair, identify funding sources, and begin to develop a work plan.

No state agency or state university may be compelled to incur expenses in connection with the operation of the forum. Appointed public members of the forum must serve without compensation from state funds. Members of the forum may receive reimbursement from the forum for travel expenses if funds for forum operations are available as determined by the director of the Office of Financial Management.

The forum must report its initial findings and recommendations by December 1 of the year following the date of the second meeting of the forum and annually after that. The reports are to be submitted to the Governor, the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, and the Secretary of the Senate.

The forum expires on July 1, 2015.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	3	
House	72	26	(House amended)
Senate	43	3	(Senate concurred)

Effective: