
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6091

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

By Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Warnick, Saldaña, Lovelett, Stanford, and Wilson, C.)

READ FIRST TIME 01/24/20.

1 AN ACT Relating to continuing the work of the Washington food
2 policy forum; and adding a new chapter to Title 89 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

5 (a) Numerous governmental agencies, state programs, and private
6 entities share goals and missions relating to food, nutrition,
7 agriculture, health, education, and economic development through
8 sustained agricultural production and improved access to nutritious
9 foods;

10 (b) The food and agriculture industry generates fifty-one billion
11 dollars annually, employs one hundred sixty thousand people, and
12 contributes thirteen percent to the state's economy;

13 (c) Agriculture is a leading employer in the state, produces over
14 three hundred different crops, and is composed of many diverse types
15 of agricultural endeavors;

16 (d) Small and direct marketing farms are a significant sector in
17 Washington's agricultural industry. Eighty-five percent of farms in
18 Washington state are classified as small farms. Washington is among
19 the top ten states in the nation for the number of farms engaging in
20 direct sales to local and regional markets. Because of their scale,
21 diversity of agricultural products, engagement in value-added

1 processing, and use of local and direct sales channels, these farms
2 tend not to be represented by commodity commissions and traditional
3 agricultural organizations;

4 (e) The state of Washington continues to lose farmland every year
5 to nonfarming uses;

6 (f) The state's food system is the network of people and
7 activities connecting growing and harvesting, processing,
8 distribution, consumption, and residue utilization, as well as
9 associated government and nongovernment institutions, regulations,
10 and programs;

11 (g) More than ten percent of Washington households experience
12 food insecurity or hunger and many public and charitable
13 organizations are engaged in the distribution of food and food
14 benefits to those in need, so there exists an opportunity to build on
15 connections between these organizations and farmers to enhance the
16 delivery of Washington-produced food to various food programs;

17 (h) The current food system in the state of Washington is complex
18 and directly affected by the activities and policies of multiple
19 federal and state agencies and local governments;

20 (i) Small and mid-scale farms in Washington provide local food
21 and maintain a vibrant culture of agriculture. Although several
22 programs exist to support small and mid-scale farm operations, there
23 are opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs to
24 reduce duplication of effort, streamline service delivery, and expand
25 access to the farmers; and

26 (j) The work done by the regional food policy councils in the
27 state can serve as a model for local efforts to bring together
28 community, government, business, and agricultural interests, and
29 improved communication between these local activities, combined with
30 state efforts, could strengthen the state food policy system.

31 (2) The legislature recognizes the need to understand the impacts
32 of governmental rules and regulations on the viability of small and
33 mid-scale agriculture.

34 (3) The purpose of this chapter is to provide for the
35 establishment of a forum to: (a) Increase the sales of Washington
36 farm products through direct marketing and other regional supply
37 chains; (b) reduce food insecurity in Washington; (c) identify
38 opportunities to improve coordination between local and regional food
39 policy councils and state and federal agencies; (d) identify current
40 rules and regulations impeding the viability of small and mid-scale

1 agriculture; and (e) identify new policies that would improve the
2 viability of small and mid-scale agriculture.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington food policy forum is
4 established as a public-private partnership and its purpose is to
5 develop recommendations to advance the following food system goals:

6 (a) To increase the availability of Washington-grown foods
7 throughout the state, including by increasing direct marketing sales
8 and consumption of Washington-grown foods;

9 (b) To expand and promote programs that bring healthy and
10 nutritious Washington-grown foods to Washington residents, including
11 increased public and private purchasing of Washington food products
12 for schools, adult care programs, and other publicly funded food
13 programs;

14 (c) To examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number
15 of farmers for small and mid-scale farms, meet the educational needs
16 for the next generation of farmers, and provide for the continued
17 economic viability of Washington food production, processing, and
18 distribution in the state;

19 (d) To reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state; and

20 (e) To identify ways to improve coordination and communication
21 among city, county, regional, and state food policy entities and
22 communication between these entities and state agencies.

23 (2) Recommendations of the food policy forum must consider, but
24 not be limited to, ways in which the following may help achieve each
25 of the goals identified under subsection (1) of this section:

26 (a) Increased collaboration and communication between local,
27 state, and federal governments and agencies;

28 (b) Innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage
29 private and public market influence, such as through institutional
30 purchasing and contracts;

31 (c) Improvements to state or federal laws or regulations or
32 funding relevant to the small and mid-scale farming interactions with
33 the food system and food security in the state;

34 (d) Improvements in state or federal program implementation
35 relevant to small and mid-scale farming interactions with the food
36 system and food security in the state;

37 (e) Identification of additional federal, state, local, and
38 private investments needed to accomplish the recommendations; and

1 (f) Defining and describing the variety of agriculture in the
2 state utilizing farm acreage, farm business type, crop and
3 agricultural product type, and defining what the term "local" means
4 in the context of food production and distribution.

5 (3) In developing its recommendations, the food policy forum:

6 (a) Shall coordinate with appropriate local, state, and federal
7 agencies, tribes, and nongovernmental organizations to avoid
8 duplication of effort;

9 (b) Shall solicit public input through public hearings or
10 informational sessions;

11 (c) May conduct research and analysis as needed within financial
12 resources available to the forum; and

13 (d) May form an advisory committee or committees to address
14 issues identified by the forum and that are within the guidelines of
15 subsection (1) of this section, as requiring additional study or
16 particular expertise.

17 (4) The directors of the state conservation commission and the
18 department of agriculture are responsible for appointing
19 participating members of the food policy forum and no appointment may
20 be made unless each director concurs in the appointment. In making
21 appointments, the directors must attempt to ensure a diversity of
22 knowledge, experience, and perspectives reflecting the issues to be
23 addressed by the forum including, but not limited to:

24 (a) State and federal government employees, including academia;

25 (b) Related nonprofit and community organizations; and

26 (c) The food industry, including food production, processing,
27 distribution, marketing, and retail sales.

28 (5) A majority of the participating members appointed by the
29 directors must appoint an administrative chair for the forum.

30 (6) In addition to members appointed by the directors, four
31 legislators may serve on the food policy forum in an ex officio
32 capacity. Legislative participants must be appointed as follows:

33 (a) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
34 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
35 representatives; and

36 (b) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
37 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

38 (7) Each member of the food policy forum shall serve without
39 compensation but may be reimbursed for travel expenses as authorized
40 in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

1 (8) Staff for the food policy forum must be provided by the state
2 conservation commission and the department of agriculture. The state
3 conservation commission and the department of agriculture are jointly
4 responsible for transmitting the recommendations of the food policy
5 forum to the legislature, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, by October
6 29, 2021, and every odd-numbered year thereafter.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Sections 1 and 2 of this act constitute a
8 new chapter in Title 89 RCW.

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