

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5303

C 99 L 21
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Exempting United States food and drug administration nonpublic information from disclosure under the state public disclosure act.

Sponsors: Senator Hunt; by request of Department of Health.

Senate Committee on State Government & Elections
House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations

Background: Public Records Act. The Public Records Act (PRA), enacted in 1972 as part of Initiative 276, requires all state and local government agencies to make all public records available for public inspection and copying unless certain statutory exemptions apply. Over 500 specific references in the PRA or other statutes remove certain information from application of the PRA, provide exceptions to the public disclosure and copying of certain information, or designate certain information as confidential. The provisions requiring public records disclosure must be interpreted liberally while the exemptions are interpreted narrowly to effectuate the general policy favoring disclosure.

The PRA provides exemptions from public disclosure for certain information relating to agriculture and the food supply, including information on the purchase, sale, or production of individual American ginseng growers or dealers; information for issuance of certificates of compliance for packers and shippers of fruits and vegetables; certain herd inventory management information for animal disease traceability submitted to the Washington State Department of Agriculture by an individual or business; and financial statements used to determine whether an applicant meets the minimum net worth requirements to operate a public livestock market.

Freedom of Information Act. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides for the disclosure of information and documents controlled by the United States government. Some types of information are exempt from disclosure under the FOIA, including trade secrets, certain commercial and financial information obtained from a person, and geological information and data concerning wells.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary: Information or records obtained by the Department of Health public health laboratories from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) pursuant to a FDA contract to obtain funding for monitoring food supplies for contamination are exempt from public disclosure if the information or records are also exempt from disclosure under the FOIA, including:

- trade secrets;
- confidential commercial information;
- information protected under the federal deliberative process privilege;
- information compiled by law enforcement; and
- information expressly required to be kept confidential by other federal laws.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0
House	81	16

Effective: July 25, 2021