

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6166

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As Passed Senate, February 6, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to extending the pesticide application safety committee.

**Brief Description:** Extending the pesticide application safety committee.

**Sponsors:** Senators Saldaña, Torres, Hasegawa, Nobles and Valdez.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor & Commerce: 1/16/24, 1/22/24 [DP].

**Floor Activity:** Passed Senate: 2/6/24, 49-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Extends the provisions establishing the Pesticide Application Safety Committee and the advisory work group to July 1, 2035, from July 1, 2025.
- Removes the requirement that the advisory work group conduct meetings virtually.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; Saldaña, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Braun, Hansen, MacEwen, Schoesler and Stanford.

**Staff:** Susan Jones (786-7404)

**Background:** The Pesticide Application Safety Committee (committee) was established by the Legislature in 2019 and is composed of:

- legislative members from both houses;
- agency heads from the Department of Agriculture (WSDA), the Washington State

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- Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Labor and Industries, and Public Lands;
- the dean of Washington State University's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences;
  - the director of the University of Washington Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center; and
  - the pesticide safety education coordinator at the Washington State University cooperative extension.

The secretary of DOH and director of WSDA are the committee cochairs. Administrative support for the committee is provided by DOH and WSDA. The committee must meet at least three times each year.

The first priority of the committee is to explore how state agencies collect and track data. The committee must also consider the feasibility and requirements of developing a shared database, including how DOH could use existing tools to better display multiagency data regarding pesticides. The committee may also evaluate and recommend policy options related to:

- improving agricultural pesticide application safety;
- establishing baseline data;
- communication, information, and education provided to and among different members of the agricultural community, including in English and Spanish and with translation apps;
- compiling industry's best practices to limit pesticide exposure;
- reporting of pesticide exposure and related issues;
- incentives for using new technology; and
- evaluating and exploring exposure prevention techniques and protocols and best practices for use of personal safety equipment and reflective gear.

The committee must provide annual reports to the Legislature. The report may include recommendations and must document the committee activities.

An advisory work group was created to collect information and make recommendations to the full committee on topics requiring unique expertise and perspectives on issues within the jurisdiction of the committee. The secretary of DOH, in consultation with the director of WSDA and the full committee, will appoint the following members to the advisory work group:

- a representative from WSDA;
- two representatives of employee organizations that represent farmworkers;
- two farmworkers with expertise on pesticide application;
- a representative of community and migrant health centers;
- a toxicologist;
- representative of growers who use air blast sprayers;
- a representative of growers who use aerial pesticide application;

- a representative of growers who use fumigation to apply pesticides; and
- a representative of aerial applicators.

The advisory work group may only hold meetings upon the committee's request. To reduce costs, the advisory work group must conduct meetings using teleconferencing or other methods, but may hold one in-person meeting per fiscal year. Members of the advisory work group are reimbursed for mileage expenses. The advisory work group must provide an annual report on their activities and recommendations to the full committee.

The provisions establishing the committee and the advisory work group expires July 1, 2025.

The committee has met six times.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill extends the provisions establishing the Pesticide Application Safety Committee and the advisory work group to July 1, 2035. The bill removes the requirement that the advisory work group conduct meetings using teleconferencing or other methods, except for once a year.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The committee was delayed substantially during Covid because the DOH and WSDA were responding to the the crisis. Since then, the agencies have been meeting and finding ways to productively share data and look at better practices. As they continue to do their work there may be different iterations of the committee and there is some overlap with other committees. Therefore, we are not extending the committee permanently.

This bill will make key changes to the bill that established the committee. WSDA leads the country in education and technical assistance in pesticide. There are other ways to protect workers in agriculture. The work and ideas from the committee and advisory workgroup will help. The changes of extending the committee and allowing the advisory work group to meet in person are needed. We support extending the committee because the pandemic significantly impacted the work. The extension allows them to continue the crucial work in protecting public health and the environment.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Rebecca Saldaña, Prime Sponsor; Ignacio Marquez, Washington State Department of Agriculture; Lauren Jenks, Washington State Department

of Health.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.