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**SENATE BILL 5214**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Shewmake, Harris, Wellman, Kauffman, Stanford, Chapman, Riccelli, and Saldaña

AN ACT Relating to mobile market programs; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; creating a new section; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that small local farmers play a crucial role in providing communities with access to fresh, healthy foods. Farmers markets provide a place for local farmers to sell their products, encouraging consumption of fresh products in the communities in which they were grown.

The legislature recognizes that some households may live in rural areas or food deserts where access to farmers markets and fresh food is limited. There are a number of programs to help increase access to fresh, healthy foods for low-income communities. The farmers market nutrition program was established by congress in 1992 to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables to women, infants, and children program participants and to expand the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers markets which benefits both program participants and local farmers. Similarly, the senior farmers market nutrition program provides low-income seniors with access to locally grown fruits and vegetables. Participants in both programs commonly use their food benefit at farmers markets, farms, and roadside stands.

The legislature further recognizes that other states including Pennsylvania and Virginia also allow mobile market providers to accept both women, infants, and children and senior farmers market nutrition program benefits. This provides greater nutritional support to households that may live in a rural area, an area without access to a farmers market, or in a food desert. In these states, eligible low-income households are still able to access fresh, healthy foods which not only benefits that household, but benefits the local farmers as well.

It is hereby the intent of the legislature to provide participants of both the women, infants, and children and senior farmers market nutrition programs access to fresh, healthy food through nonprofit mobile markets to promote access to fresh, healthy food regardless of a household's proximity to a farmers market.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The mobile market program is established in the department with the goals of providing increased nutrition access to participants of the women, infant, and children and senior farmers market nutrition program, while also supporting local farmers.

(2) The mobile market program is available to participants of the women, infant, and children and senior farmers market nutrition programs so long as funding is made available to the department through the United States department of agriculture.

(3) The department shall define the mobile market program through rule making. At a minimum, the definition must require mobile market programs to be operated by a nonprofit organization and serve an area that does not have a farmers market.

(4) The department shall conduct rule making consistent with this section to establish the mobile market program.

(5) If the department deems it necessary to file a waiver, the department shall file a waiver with the United States department of agriculture to allow mobile market programs to accept both women, infants, and children and senior farmers market nutrition program benefits.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect May 1, 2025.

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