

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1553

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to extending the dairy inspection program until June 30, 2031.

Brief Description: Extending the dairy inspection program until June 30, 2031.

Sponsors: Representatives Richards, Dent, Hackney, Bernbaum, Kloba and Springer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/11/25, 2/12/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the expiration date for the assessment on milk processed in the state from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2031.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Reeves, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Engell, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bernbaum, McClintock, Nance, Orcutt, Richards, Schmick and Springer.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Through its Food Safety Program, the Washington State Department of Agriculture administers a milk inspection program to maintain compliance with the Grade "A" Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO) published by the United States Public Health Service, United States Department of Health and Human Services, and the United States Food and Drug Administration. The PMO is the national standard for milk sanitation, and it requires

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milk processing plants to be inspected at least once every three months. Complying with the PMO allows milk to be shipped without restriction across state lines.

To fund the milk inspection program an assessment is levied on all milk processed in the state and is paid by the operator of the first milk processing plant that receives the milk for processing, including processing plants that produce their own milk for processing. The assessment may not exceed 0.0054 cents per hundredweight. Milk processing plants whose monthly assessment for receipt of milk totals less than \$20 in any given month are exempt from the assessment for that month. Funds from the assessment may be used only for dairy inspections and are deposited into the Dairy Inspection Account in the Agricultural Local Fund.

The assessment expires June 30, 2025.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date for the assessment on milk processed in the state is extended from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2031.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 30, 2025.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The dairy inspection assessment is important because inspection ensures that milk may be shipped across state lines, but it is about to expire. This is not a new funding ask. Dairy farmers and inspectors work together to address issues that come up in inspections. It is important to the dairy industry that all aspects of the milk production process are inspected to ensure cows are healthy and milk is safe.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) It is important that milk continue to be inspected so it can be shipped out of state.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Adison Richards, prime sponsor; Natalie Doelman, Washington State Dairy Federation; and Ben Buchholz, Darigold.

(Other) Evan Sheffels, Washington State Department of Agriculture.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.