

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2619

As of February 19, 2026

Title: An act relating to reducing regulatory stress in agriculture.

Brief Description: Reducing regulatory stress in agriculture.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Schmick, Barnard and Lekanoff.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/17/26, 95-2.

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/19/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a joint legislative task force on reducing regulatory stress for agricultural producers.
- Directs the task force to review regulations related to land use and zoning, stewardship of water resources, grazing rights, and pesticides and report to the Legislature by November 1, 2028.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Staff: Elena Becker (786-7493)

Background: In 2024, the Legislature directed the Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to convene a work group to address mental health and suicide prevention in the agricultural sector. The work group submitted a required final report to the Legislature in 2025 that contained a series of recommendations, some of which related to alleviating financial uncertainty and streamlining regulatory processes.

Summary of Bill: A joint legislative task force on reducing regulatory stress for agricultural producers is established. The task force must review aspects of the regulatory environment that lead to agricultural producer stress and recommend actions to alleviate

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that stress by streamlining, modifying, or eliminating existing regulations related to land use and zoning, stewardship of water resources, grazing rights, and pesticides.

The task force membership is:

- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- the Director of WSDA, or designee;
- the Director of the Department of Commerce, or designee;
- the Director of the Department of Ecology, or designee;
- the Commissioner of Public Lands, or designee;
- the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, or designee;
- the Director of the Governor's Office of Regulatory Innovation and Assistance, or designee;
- the Secretary of Health, or designee; and
- the Director of the Department of Labor and Industries, or designee.

The task force will be staffed by Senate Committee Services and the House Office of Program Research. Guidelines for task force expenses and travel reimbursement are established. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by November 1, 2028.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: Yes.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The agriculture sector in the USA has the highest suicide rate of any sector. In 2024 a proviso established a mental health workgroup to explore the cause of those issues. That workgroup identified an overregulated environment and it is natural to put together a workgroup to find out if there are regulations we can eliminate or reduce to support our agricultural producers. It is distressing every time we lose someone in agriculture to suicide or they leave agriculture because they can't take the stress anymore is distressing. This is a way of life and a culture, not just a job. These are the people who feed us.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Tom Dent, Prime Sponsor.

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