

**RCW 28B.121.005 Findings—Intent.** The legislature finds that there is a critical shortage of food animal veterinarians particularly in rural areas of the state. The legislature finds that among the factors contributing to this shortage is the need to repay student loans that are taken out to pay for an extensive and high-cost education. To pay these student loans, licensed graduates currently find it necessary to take higher paying positions that provide service to companion and small animals.

The legislature finds that the livestock industry provides a critical component of the food supply. Providing adequate animal health and disease diagnostic services is of high importance not only to protect animal health, but also for the protection of our food supply, the protection of public health from potential effects of contagious diseases, and to provide an essential disease detection and response capability.

The legislature intends to increase the supply of food animal veterinarians by providing incentives to graduates of Washington State University college of veterinary medicine to focus on food animal health services to address this critical shortage. [2008 c 208 § 1.]