

WSR 25-22-049

PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

[Filed October 30, 2025, 7:18 a.m.]

Subject of Possible Rule Making: Maple syrup inspection and chapter 16-165 WAC, Food inspection.

Due to a petition for rule making, the department of agriculture (department) is considering establishing a new chapter of rule that creates inspection standards for maple syrup processors.

The department is also considering adding a definition and exemption for maple syrup processors to chapter 16-165 WAC, Food inspection.

Statutes Authorizing the Agency to Adopt Rules on this Subject: RCW 69.07.020 Enforcement—Rules—Adoption—Contents—Standards, and 69.07.070 Rules and regulations, hearings subject to Administrative Procedure Act.

Reasons Why Rules on this Subject may be Needed and What They Might Accomplish: Chapter 16-165 WAC was adopted to safeguard the consuming public from unsafe, adulterated, or misbranded food by requiring licensing of all food processing plants as defined in this chapter and setting forth the requirements for such licensing.

The department would like to create a new rule to establish inspection standards for maple syrup processors that are separate from the standards for other food processors.

The department believes that the creation of rules that acknowledge the unique nature of maple syrup production, the very short production season, and low risk of the product will establish an appropriate, science-based regulatory structure to support the growth of this industry while ensuring food safety and public health.

Other Federal and State Agencies that Regulate this Subject and the Process Coordinating the Rule with These Agencies: United States Food and Drug Administration.

Process for Developing New Rule: This rule making was requested by affected stakeholders that have already provided input into current inspection standards for the maple syrup industry. The department will continue to work with stakeholders through the development of the rule language and provide opportunities to comment.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting Wil Satak, Program Manager, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560, phone 360-951-5086, email wsatak@agr.wa.gov, website www.agr.wa.gov; or Angelique Finney, Assistant Program Manager, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560, phone 509-316-6196, email afinney@agr.wa.gov, website www.agr.wa.gov.

October 14, 2025
Luisa F. Castro
Assistant Director