
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1685

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By House Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Gregerson, Hudgins, McBride, Peterson, Bergquist, Ortiz-Self, Tarleton, Orwall, Robinson, Farrell, Riccelli, Fitzgibbon, Walkinshaw, Senn, Lytton, Appleton, Ryu, Tharinger, Moscoso, Ormsby, Fey, and Jenkins)

1 AN ACT Relating to the establishment of a Washington food policy
2 forum; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

5 (a) Numerous governmental agencies, state programs, and private
6 entities share goals and missions relating to food, nutrition,
7 agriculture, health, education, and economic development through
8 sustained agricultural production and improved access to nutritious
9 foods;

10 (b) The food and agriculture industry generates forty-nine
11 billion dollars annually, employs one hundred sixty thousand people,
12 and contributes thirteen percent to the state's economy;

13 (c) Agriculture is a leading employer in the state, produces over
14 three hundred different crops, and is composed of many diverse types
15 of agricultural endeavors;

16 (d) The state of Washington continues to lose farmland every year
17 to nonfarming uses;

18 (e) Washington is ranked with the bottom half of states for very
19 low food security;

1 (f) According to data average for the years 2004 through 2008,
2 nearly sixty-one percent of Washington adults are either obese or
3 overweight;

4 (g) Obesity contributes substantially to the burden of
5 preventable illnesses and premature death, which are estimated to
6 cost Washington almost two billion dollars annually;

7 (h) There is a known link between food insecurity and housing
8 insecurity;

9 (i) The state's food system is the network of people and
10 activities connecting growing and harvesting, processing,
11 distribution, consumption, and residue utilization, as well as
12 associated government and nongovernment institutions, regulations,
13 and programs.

14 (j) The current food system in the state of Washington is complex
15 and directly affected by the activities and policies of multiple
16 nongovernmental organizations, state agencies, and local governments,
17 and a coordinated, systemic approach is necessary to improve the
18 health of Washington's citizens and improve the economic viability of
19 agriculture; and

20 (k) The work done by the regional food policy councils in the
21 state can serve as a model for statewide efforts to bring together
22 community, government, business, and agricultural interests to work
23 on integrated and sustainable policy recommendations to strengthen
24 the regional food system that works towards a thriving, inclusive,
25 and just local and regional food system that enhances the health of
26 people, diverse communities, economies, and environments.

27 (2) The legislature recognizes the need to understand the impacts
28 of governmental rules and regulations on the viability of the
29 agricultural sector and on the ability of citizens of all backgrounds
30 to obtain sufficient, high quality foods for themselves and their
31 families.

32 (3) The purpose of this act is to provide for the establishment
33 of a forum whereby state food policy, food-related programs, and
34 food-related issues can be examined, improved, and better integrated
35 to accomplish the overarching public goals. It is the intent of the
36 legislature to place the state in a favorable position to qualify for
37 available federal funds, moneys from foundations, and other sources
38 to fund the activities of the forum.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington food policy forum is
2 established as a public-private partnership. The purpose of the forum
3 is to develop recommendations to advance the following food system
4 goals:

5 (a) To increase production, sales, and consumption of
6 Washington-grown foods;

7 (b) To develop and promote programs that bring healthy Washington
8 grown foods to Washington residents, including increased state
9 purchasing of local food products for schools, adult care programs,
10 and other state-funded food programs;

11 (c) To review and develop programs that support providing proper
12 nutrition and avoid burdens of obesity and chronic diet-related
13 diseases;

14 (d) To protect the land and water resources needed for sustained
15 local food production;

16 (e) To examine ways to encourage retention of an adequate number
17 of farmers, the educational needs for an adequate agricultural
18 workforce, and to provide for the continued economic viability of
19 local food production, processing, and distribution in the state; and

20 (f) To reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state and ensure
21 that the health and societal benefits of a healthy Washington food
22 system that provides access to nutritionally dense foods are shared
23 with families at all income levels, and particularly with vulnerable
24 children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and communities of
25 color.

26 (2) Recommendations of the food policy forum must consider, but
27 not be limited to, ways in which the following may help achieve each
28 of the six goals identified under subsection (1) of this section:

29 (a) Increased collaboration and communication between local,
30 state, and federal governments and agencies;

31 (b) Innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage
32 private and public market influence, such as through institutional
33 purchasing and contracts;

34 (c) Improvements to state or federal laws or regulations relevant
35 to the food system and food security in the state;

36 (d) Improvements in state or federal program implementation
37 relevant to the food system and food security in the state; and

38 (e) Identification of additional federal, state, local, and
39 private investments needed to accomplish the recommendations.

40 (3) In developing its recommendations, the food policy forum:

1 (a) Shall coordinate with the office of farmland preservation to
2 avoid duplication of effort;

3 (b) Shall solicit public input through public hearings or
4 informational sessions;

5 (c) May conduct research and analysis as needed within financial
6 resources available to the forum;

7 (d) May form an advisory committee or committees to address
8 issues identified by the forum as requiring additional study or
9 particular expertise; and

10 (e) Shall coordinate with, and build on the processes already
11 undertaken by the Washington state food system roundtable initiated
12 by executive order No. 10-02.

13 (4) The director of the state conservation commission is
14 responsible for appointing participating members of the food policy
15 forum. In making appointments, the director of the state conservation
16 commission must attempt to ensure a diversity of knowledge,
17 experience, and perspectives by building on the representation
18 established by the food system roundtable initiated by executive
19 order No. 10-02 and from sources such as:

20 (a) State and federal government employees, including academia;

21 (b) Related nonprofit and community organizations; and

22 (c) The food industry, including food production, processing,
23 distribution, marketing, and retail sales.

24 (5) A majority of the participating members appointed by the
25 director of the state conservation commission must appoint an
26 administrative chair for the forum.

27 (6) In addition to members appointed by the director of the state
28 conservation commission, four legislators may serve on the food
29 policy forum in an ex officio capacity. Legislative participants must
30 be appointed as follows:

31 (a) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
32 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
33 representatives; and

34 (b) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
35 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

36 (7) Each member of the food policy forum shall serve without
37 compensation but may be reimbursed for travel expenses as authorized
38 in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

39 (8) Staff for the food policy forum must be provided by the state
40 conservation commission. The state conservation commission is

1 responsible for transmitting the recommendations of the food policy
2 forum to the legislature. All recommendations of the food policy
3 forum must be transmitted to the legislature by the state
4 conservation commission, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, by October
5 31, 2016. The recommendations may include considerations for
6 continuation of the food policy forum beyond the expiration date of
7 this section and any changes to the mission, charge, or structure of
8 the food policy forum should it continue beyond the expiration date.

9 (9) This section expires July 1, 2017.

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