

---

ENGROSSED 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)

READ FIRST TIME 02/16/15.

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;

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; and

13 (f) Shall coordinate with the Washington State University center  
14 for sustaining agriculture and natural resources as provided in  
15 section 3 of this act.

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

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

24 (b) Related nonprofit and community organizations; and

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

27 (5) A majority of the participating members appointed by the  
28 director of the state conservation commission must appoint an  
29 administrative chair for the forum.

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

34 (a) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one  
35 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of  
36 representatives; and

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

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

4 (8) Staff for the food policy forum must be provided by the state  
5 conservation commission. The state conservation commission is  
6 responsible for transmitting the recommendations of the food policy  
7 forum to the legislature. All recommendations of the food policy  
8 forum must be transmitted to the legislature by the state  
9 conservation commission, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, by October  
10 31, 2016. The recommendations may include considerations for  
11 continuation of the food policy forum beyond the expiration date of  
12 this section and any changes to the mission, charge, or structure of  
13 the food policy forum should it continue beyond the expiration date.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The food policy forum shall coordinate  
15 with the Washington State University center for sustaining  
16 agriculture and natural resources and review, consider, and discuss  
17 the study described in this section that must be performed by the  
18 Washington State University center for sustaining agriculture and  
19 natural resources.

20 (2) The study shall build on the work performed by the Washington  
21 state food system roundtable initiated by executive order No. 10-02  
22 and identify a twenty-five year goal for expansion of the state's  
23 food production, processing, and distribution capacity by:

24 (a) Evaluating the geographic distances between local farm  
25 production and points of local food consumption within the local food  
26 supply chain in order to define what constitutes a local economic  
27 impact;

28 (b) Evaluating the state's capacity to produce a variety of food  
29 products given the state's environment and climate;

30 (c) Assessing a potential market demand for an increased local  
31 food supply, through surveys of processors, distributors, and buyers;

32 (d) Analyzing the Seattle restaurant online resource as a model  
33 and potential navigational tool for local food producers as a  
34 potential replacement of the Washington state department of  
35 agriculture handbook for small and direct marketing farms, to reduce  
36 regulatory barriers within the local food supply chain;

37 (e) Identifying infrastructure needs to support the local food  
38 industry, including processing capacity and transportation networks;

1 (f) Assessing the relative economic impact of retaining local  
2 food supply chain business within the state and local food producers  
3 exporting goods out of state;

4 (g) Assessing the institutional capacity of state agencies and  
5 organizations to foster economic growth in the food sector;

6 (h) Evaluating changes in state planning, permitting,  
7 environmental regulation, and financing to enhance food production,  
8 processing, and distribution;

9 (i) Evaluating the economic impact of urban community gardens,  
10 including P-patches that are part of the local food supply chain and  
11 provide healthy foods for schools and local communities; and

12 (j) Identifying legislative actions needed to implement food  
13 system improvements.

14 (3) The recommendations of the study must include short and long-  
15 term action plans for the legislature to support and sustain the  
16 local food sector in Washington. The recommendations of the study  
17 must also include strategies for effective education and awareness  
18 programs with school and community groups about the local food supply  
19 chain. The recommendations of the study may include specific  
20 legislative approaches, such as changes in state law, and  
21 nonlegislative approaches, such as action plans for state agencies  
22 and local governments.

23 (4) The members of the food policy forum appointed pursuant to  
24 section 2 of this act may provide technical information, advice, and  
25 assistance to the Washington State University center for sustaining  
26 agriculture and natural resources in completing the study.

27 (5) The study, with findings and recommendations, must be  
28 reported to the food policy forum by July 1, 2016.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act expires July 1, 2017.

--- END ---