
HOUSE BILL 1685

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

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 01/26/15. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

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) A number of governmental agencies and programs of the state
6 share goals and missions relating to food, nutrition, agriculture,
7 health, education, and economic development through sustained
8 agricultural production and improved access to nutritious foods;

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 (h) There is a known link between food insecurity and housing
5 insecurity;

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

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

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

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

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

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington food policy forum is
38 established. The purpose of the forum is to develop recommendations
39 to advance the following food system goals:

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

3 (b) To develop and promote programs that bring healthy Washington
4 grown foods to Washington residents, including increased state
5 purchasing of local food products for school, adult care programs,
6 and other state-funded food programs;

7 (c) To review and develop programs that support providing proper
8 nutrition and avoid burdens of obesity and chronic diet-related
9 diseases;

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

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

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

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

25 (a) Increased collaboration and communication between state
26 agencies;

27 (b) Increased collaboration and communication between local,
28 state, and federal agencies;

29 (c) Innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage
30 private and public market influence, such as through institutional
31 purchasing and contracts;

32 (d) Improvements to state or federal laws or regulations relevant
33 to the food system and food security in the state;

34 (e) Improvements in state or federal program implementation
35 relevant to the food system and food security in the state; and

36 (f) Identification of additional federal, state, local, and
37 private investments needed to accomplish the recommendations.

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

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

1 (b) Shall solicit public input through public hearings or
2 informational sessions;

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

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

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

11 (4) The director of the state conservation commission is
12 responsible for appointing participating members of the food policy
13 forum and appointing an administrative chair for the forum. In making
14 appointments, the director of the state conservation commission must
15 attempt to ensure a diversity of knowledge, experience, and
16 perspectives from sources such as:

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

18 (b) Related nonprofit and community organizations; and

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

21 (5) In addition to members appointed by the director of the state
22 conservation commission, four legislators may serve on the food
23 policy forum in an ex officio capacity. Legislative participants must
24 be appointed as follows:

25 (a) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
26 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
27 representatives; and

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

30 (6) The food policy forum must be administered by the state
31 conservation commission. Each member of the food policy forum shall
32 serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for travel expenses
33 as authorized in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

34 (7) All recommendations of the food policy council must be
35 presented to the legislature through the state conservation
36 commission, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, by October 31, 2016. The
37 recommendations may include considerations for continuation of the
38 food policy forum beyond the expiration date of this section and any
39 changes to the mission, charge, or structure of the food policy forum
40 should it continue beyond the expiration date.

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

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