
SENATE BILL 6343

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senators Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles, Swecker, Haugen, and Hatfield

Read first time 01/12/10. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to the establishment of the Washington food policy
2 council; adding a new chapter to Title 15 RCW; and providing an
3 expiration date.

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

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

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

10 (b) The food and agriculture industry generates forty-two billion
11 dollars annually, employs one hundred sixty thousand people, and
12 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 of
15 agricultural endeavors;

16 (d) Washington state continues to lose approximately seventy
17 thousand acres of farmland every year to nonfarming uses and the
18 average age of farmers in the state is fifty-seven;

1 (e) Washington is currently ranked twenty-eighth in the nation for
2 very low food security with one hundred twelve thousand households
3 experiencing hunger, a twenty-four percent increase from 2008;

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

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

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

16 (2) The legislature recognizes the need to understand the impacts
17 of governmental rules and regulations on the viability of the
18 agricultural sector and on the ability of citizens of all backgrounds
19 to obtain sufficient, high quality foods for themselves and their
20 families.

21 (3) The purpose of this act is to establish a forum whereby state
22 food policy, food-related programs, and food-related issues can be
23 examined, improved, and better integrated to accomplish the overarching
24 public goals.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington food policy council is
26 established. The purpose of the council is to develop recommendations
27 to advance the following food system goals:

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

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

34 (c) To review and develop programs that support providing proper
35 nutrition and avoid burdens of obesity and chronic diet-related
36 diseases;

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

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

7 (f) To reduce food insecurity and hunger in the state and ensure
8 that the benefits of a healthy Washington food system are shared with
9 families at all income levels, and particularly with vulnerable
10 children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and communities of
11 color.

12 (2) Recommendations shall include benchmarks and criteria for
13 measuring progress in achieving each goal.

14 (3) Recommendations shall consider, but not be limited to, ways in
15 which the following may help achieve each of the five goals:

16 (a) Increased collaboration and communication between state
17 agencies;

18 (b) Increased collaboration and communication between local, state,
19 and federal agencies;

20 (c) Innovative public-private partnerships that can leverage
21 private and public market influence such as through institutional
22 purchasing and contracts;

23 (d) A review of (i) the future of farming study that was
24 coordinated by the department of agriculture regarding issues affecting
25 the future viability of agriculture in the state of Washington, (ii)
26 reports issued by the office of farmland preservation, and (iii) data
27 and analysis of food insecurity across the state as reported by the
28 department of health behavioral risk factors surveillance surveys;

29 (e) Improvements to state or federal laws or regulations relevant
30 to the food system and food security in the state;

31 (f) Improvements in state or federal program implementation
32 relevant to the food system and food security in the state;

33 (g) Identifying additional federal, state, local, and private
34 investments needed to accomplish the recommendations.

35 (4) In developing its recommendations, the council:

36 (a) Shall solicit public input through public hearings or
37 informational sessions;

1 (b) May conduct research and analysis as needed within financial
2 resources available to the council; and

3 (c) Shall invite additional stakeholder participation through an
4 advisory committee created to address issues identified by the council
5 as requiring study or particular expertise.

6 (5) The council may establish advisory committees to address
7 specific issue areas.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) All members of the Washington food
9 policy council are voting members.

10 (2) The following are invited to participate as ex officio members
11 of the Washington food policy council:

12 (a) The director of the department of agriculture or the director's
13 designee;

14 (b) The secretary of the department of health or the secretary's
15 designee;

16 (c) The superintendent of public instruction or the
17 superintendent's designee;

18 (d) The director of the department of commerce or the director's
19 designee;

20 (e) The secretary of the department of social and health services
21 or the secretary's designee;

22 (f) The dean of the college of agricultural, human, and natural
23 resource sciences at Washington State University or the dean's
24 designee;

25 (g) The director of the department of ecology or the director's
26 designee;

27 (h) The chair of the state conservation commission or the chair's
28 designee; and

29 (i) A representative from the University of Washington who has
30 expertise in food systems or nutrition appointed by the president of
31 the University of Washington.

32 (3) The following members shall be appointed by the governor to the
33 food policy council:

34 (a) Two representatives who are farmers or representatives of a
35 farm organization, with at least one representing small and medium-
36 sized farmers;

1 (b) One representative who represents food distribution,
2 processing, and marketing interests;

3 (c) One representative who represents direct-to-consumer marketing
4 efforts;

5 (d) One representative who represents community-based efforts to
6 address nutrition and public health;

7 (e) One representative who represents nongovernmental statewide
8 anti-hunger efforts;

9 (f) One representative who represents food banks; and

10 (g) One representative who represents nongovernmental statewide
11 efforts to protect the state's land, air, and water.

12 (4) The eight governor-appointed members shall be appointed for
13 terms of three years or until a successor is appointed. Members are
14 eligible to be reappointed.

15 (5) The chair of the council shall be elected by the members of the
16 council for a term not to exceed two years.

17 (6) The public members of the council shall serve without
18 compensation from state funds. The ex officio members of the council
19 shall serve without additional compensation of state funds. Members of
20 the council may receive reimbursement from the council for travel
21 expenses as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 if funds for
22 council operations are available.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The Washington food policy council shall
24 be formed. The governor shall convene an organizational meeting within
25 one hundred twenty days of the effective date of this section. At its
26 first meeting, the council must, at a minimum, (a) elect a council
27 chair from among its members and (b) discuss potential funding sources
28 for the council operations including funding opportunities from both
29 public and private sources.

30 (2) The chair of the council is responsible for working with
31 councilmembers to search for and apply for funding from federal
32 sources, private foundations, or other nonstate general fund sources.
33 Once the funding needs have been determined in addition to a funding
34 source, the council chair may convene a second meeting of the council
35 to proceed, within available funds, with the development of a work
36 plan. No state agency or state university may be compelled to incur
37 expenses in connection with the operation of the council.

1 (3) The council shall report its initial findings and
2 recommendations by December 1st of the year following the date of the
3 second meeting of the council. Thereafter, the council shall submit an
4 annual report that includes recommendations and progress on benchmarks
5 by December 1st each year. These reports shall be submitted to the
6 office of the governor and to the offices of the chief clerk of the
7 house of representatives and the secretary of the senate.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This chapter expires July 1, 2015.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act constitute
10 a new chapter in Title 15 RCW.

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