
HOUSE BILL 1631

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Shewmake, Ryu, Leavitt, Wicks, Bateman, Duerr, Boehnke, and Walen

Prefiled 12/10/21.

1 AN ACT Relating to supporting Washington's food production system
2 by providing technical assistance in support of improved voluntary
3 environmental stewardship; amending RCW 89.08.610 and 89.08.630;
4 adding a new section to chapter 89.08 RCW; and creating a new
5 section.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that Washington's
8 farmers and food processors are vital to the local and global food
9 chain. In particular, Washington is home to innovative and
10 conservation-minded food producers who lead the nation and the world
11 in producing healthful food on a sustainable basis. The legislature
12 also recognizes the seriousness of climate change and is committed to
13 improving Washington's resilience to impacts to all business sectors,
14 including agriculture. Moreover, the agricultural community can play
15 a key role in combating climate change by increasing energy
16 efficiency, utilizing more green energy resources, increasing carbon
17 sequestration, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Washington has
18 a tradition of voluntarily engaging farmers with technical assistance
19 to achieve objectives of the state, including clean air and clean
20 water.

1 Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to establish a
2 program that provides additional technical assistance, including
3 awareness of potential funding opportunities, to farmers and food
4 processors to help increase energy efficiency, further reduce
5 greenhouse gas emissions, and increase carbon sequestration, all
6 while reducing long-term operating costs and creating new market
7 opportunities.

8 **Sec. 2.** RCW 89.08.610 and 2020 c 351 s 2 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 The definitions in this section apply throughout this section and
11 RCW 89.08.615 through 89.08.635 and section 3 of this act unless the
12 context clearly requires otherwise.

13 (1) "Advisor" means a sustainable farms and fields advisor.

14 (2) "Carbon dioxide equivalent emission" means a metric measure
15 used to compare the emission impacts from various greenhouse gases
16 based on their relative radiative forcing effect over a specified
17 period of time compared to carbon dioxide emissions.

18 ~~((2))~~ (3) "Carbon dioxide equivalent impact" means a metric
19 measure of the cumulative radiative forcing impacts of both carbon
20 dioxide equivalent emissions and the radiative forcing benefits of
21 carbon storage.

22 ~~((3))~~ (4) "Commission" means the Washington state conservation
23 commission created in this chapter.

24 ~~((4))~~ (5) "Conservation district" means one or a group of
25 Washington state's conservation districts created in this chapter.

26 (6) "Pool" means a group of geographically adjacent conservation
27 districts that will share the services of an advisor.

28 (7) "Sustainable farms and fields plan" means a site-specific
29 suite of recommendations that can help a farm or food processing
30 facility increase energy efficiency, utilize more green energy,
31 sequester carbon, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 89.08
33 RCW to read as follows:

34 (1) The sustainable farms and fields advisors network is
35 established at the commission to further assist agricultural
36 producers and food processors in increasing energy efficiency and
37 utilization of green energy, sequestering carbon, and reducing
38 greenhouse gas emissions, all of which can help reduce operating

1 costs, improve soil health and crop yield, provide environmental
2 cobenefits, and create new market opportunities in a green economy.

3 (2) The commission shall develop a network of sustainable farms
4 and fields advisors whereby groups of conservation districts will
5 hire, host, and share the services of sustainable farms and fields
6 advisors.

7 (3) The services to be provided by sustainable farms and fields
8 advisors include, but are not limited to:

9 (a) Consultations regarding, and development of, sustainable
10 farms and fields plans for interested farmers and food processors to
11 help them reduce their carbon footprint by increasing energy
12 efficiency, increasing the utilization and production of green
13 energy, sequestering carbon, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
14 and

15 (b) Informing conservation districts, farmers, and food
16 processors about local, state, and federal funding opportunities,
17 such as the sustainable farms and fields grant program, to implement
18 practices that help achieve these goals to reduce the carbon
19 footprint of farmers and food processors.

20 (4) The commission shall establish within each district pool a
21 sustainable farms and fields committee to develop a prioritized list
22 of farmers and food processors interested in working with the
23 advisor. The advisor's workload and priorities are set according to
24 an interlocal agreement established between the districts in the pool
25 for this purpose.

26 (5) The commission shall hire a sustainable farms and fields
27 coordinator who is responsible for coordinating the advisors,
28 disseminating current information about energy efficiency and
29 climate-smart practices and funding opportunities, applying for
30 grants, writing progress reports, and other duties as needed.

31 **Sec. 4.** RCW 89.08.630 and 2020 c 351 s 6 are each amended to
32 read as follows:

33 (1) By October 15, 2021, and every two years thereafter, the
34 commission shall report to the legislature and the governor on the
35 performance of the sustainable farms and fields grant program and the
36 sustainable farms and fields advisors, including, among other things,
37 grants awarded, projects funded, greenhouse gas emissions reduced,
38 and carbon sequestered.

1 (2) The commission shall update at least annually a public list
2 of projects and pertinent information including a summary of state
3 and federal funds, private funds spent, landowner and other private
4 cost-share matching expenditures, the total number of projects, and
5 an estimate of carbon sequestered or carbon emissions reduced.

6 (3) By July 1, 2024, the commission, in consultation with
7 Washington State University and the University of Washington, must
8 evaluate and update the most appropriate carbon equivalency metric to
9 apply to the sustainable farms and fields grant program. Until this
10 equivalency is updated by the commission, or unless the commission
11 identifies a better metric, the commission must initially use a one
12 hundred year storage equivalency that can be linearly annualized to
13 recognize the storage of carbon on an annual basis based on the
14 storage of 3.67 tons of biogenic carbon for one hundred years being
15 assigned a value equal to avoiding one ton of carbon dioxide
16 equivalent emissions.

17 (4) The grant recipient and other private cost-sharing
18 participants may at their own discretion allow their business or
19 other name to be listed on the public report produced by the
20 commission. All grant recipients must allow anonymized information
21 about the full funding of their project to be made available for
22 public reporting purposes.

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