
SENATE BILL 5550

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Saldaña and Warnick

Read first time 01/23/19. Referred to Committee on Labor & Commerce.

1 AN ACT Relating to implementing the recommendations of the
2 pesticide application safety work group; adding a new section to
3 chapter 70.104 RCW; creating a new section; and providing expiration
4 dates.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) In 2018, the legislature passed
7 Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6529. The bill recognized
8 that farmers, farmworkers, and the broader community share an
9 interest in minimizing human exposure to pesticides. It also
10 recognized that gains have been made in reducing human exposure to
11 pesticides and that collaboration between state agencies and the
12 farming community could further reduce agricultural workers exposure
13 to pesticide drift.

14 (2) The legislation established a pesticide application safety
15 work group that would make recommendations for improving pesticide
16 application safety. Work group members included legislators from both
17 chambers and caucuses, as well as representation from state agencies
18 and the commission on Hispanic affairs. The work group sought public
19 participation to learn more about pesticide application safety. Many
20 stakeholders including but not limited to local farm hosts, the

1 agricultural industry, and members of the agricultural workforce
2 contributed valuable assistance and input.

3 (3) The work group reached two noteworthy recommendations
4 regarding what can be done now to improve pesticide application
5 safety. The recommendations are to:

6 (a) Expand training because the department of agriculture lacks
7 sufficient resources to meet the training demand from pesticide
8 applicators and handlers; and

9 (b) Establish a new pesticide application safety panel to provide
10 an opportunity to evaluate and recommend policy options, and
11 investigate exposure cases.

12 (4) The work group concluded that legislation is warranted to
13 expand funding for a training program and set up a new pesticide
14 application safety panel with clear objectives.

15 (5) This section expires July 1, 2025.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 70.104
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) The pesticide application safety committee is established.
19 Appointments to the committee must be made as soon as possible after
20 the legislature convenes in regular session. The committee is
21 composed of the following members:

22 (a) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house
23 of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of
24 representatives;

25 (b) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the
26 senate, appointed by the president of the senate;

27 (c) The director of the department of agriculture, or an
28 assistant director designated by the director;

29 (d) The secretary of the department of health, or an assistant
30 secretary designated by the secretary;

31 (e) The director of the department of labor and industries, or an
32 assistant director designated by the director;

33 (f) The commissioner of public lands, or an assistant
34 commissioner designated by the commissioner;

35 (g) The director of the Washington poison center, or an assistant
36 director designated by the director;

37 (h) The dean of the college of agricultural, human, and natural
38 resource sciences at the Washington State University, or an assistant
39 dean designated by the dean; and

1 (i) The pesticide safety education coordinator at the Washington
2 State University cooperative extension.

3 (2) The committee shall be cochaired by the secretary of the
4 department of health, or the assistant secretary designated by the
5 secretary, and the director of the department of agriculture, or the
6 assistant director designated by the director.

7 (3) Primary responsibility for administrative support for the
8 committee, including developing reports, research, and other
9 organizational support, shall be provided by the department of health
10 and the department of agriculture. The committee must hold its first
11 meeting by September 2019. The committee must meet at least three
12 times each year. The meetings shall be at a time and place specified
13 by the cochairs, or at the call of a majority of the committee.

14 (4)(a) An advisory work group is created to collect information
15 and make recommendations to the full committee on topics requiring
16 unique expertise and perspectives on issues within the jurisdiction
17 of the committee.

18 (b) The advisory work group shall consist of two representatives
19 of employee organizations that represent farmworkers, two farmworkers
20 with expertise on pesticide application, a representative of
21 community and migrant health centers, a toxicologist, a
22 representative of growers who use air blast sprayers, a
23 representative of growers who use aerial pesticide application, a
24 representative of growers who use fumigation to apply pesticides, and
25 a representative of aerial applicators. The secretary of health, in
26 consultation with the director of the department of agriculture and
27 the full committee, must appoint members of the advisory work group,
28 and the department of health must staff the advisory work group. The
29 letter of appointment to the advisory work group members must be
30 signed by both cochairs.

31 (c) The advisory work group must attend the meetings of the
32 committee and hold additional meetings as necessary.

33 (d) Members of the advisory work group shall be reimbursed for
34 mileage expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.060.

35 (e) The advisory work group must provide a report on their
36 activities and recommendations to the full committee by November 9th
37 of each year.

38 (5) The first priority of the committee is to explore how the
39 departments of agriculture, labor and industries, and health, and the
40 Washington poison center collect and track data. The committee must

1 also consider the feasibility and requirements of developing a shared
2 database, including how the department of health could use existing
3 tools, such as the tracking network, to better display multiagency
4 data regarding pesticides. The committee may also evaluate and
5 recommend policy options that would take action to:

6 (a) Improve pesticide application safety with agricultural
7 applications;

8 (b) Lead an effort to establish baseline data for the type and
9 quantity of pesticide applications used in Washington to be able to
10 compare the number of exposures with overall number of applications;

11 (c) Research ways to improve pesticide application communication
12 among different members of the agricultural community, including
13 educating the public in English and Spanish about acute and chronic
14 health information about pesticides;

15 (d) Compile industry's best practices for use to improve
16 pesticide application safety to limit pesticide exposure;

17 (e) Continue to investigate reasons why members of the
18 agricultural workforce do not or may not report pesticide exposure;

19 (f) Explore new avenues for reporting with investigation without
20 fear of retaliation;

21 (g) Work with stakeholders to consider trainings for how and when
22 to report;

23 (h) Explore incentives for using new technology by funding a
24 partial buy-out program for old spray technology;

25 (i) Consider developing an effective community health education
26 plan;

27 (j) Consult with community partners to enhance educational
28 initiatives that work with the agricultural workforce, their
29 families, and surrounding communities to reduce the risk of pesticide
30 exposure;

31 (k) Enhance efforts to work with pesticide manufacturers and the
32 environmental protection agency to improve access to non-English
33 pesticide labeling in the United States;

34 (l) Work with research partners to develop, or promote the use of
35 translation apps for pesticide label safety information, or both;

36 (m) Evaluate prevention techniques to minimize exposure events;

37 (n) Develop more Spanish language and other language educational
38 materials for distribution, including through social media and app-
39 based learning for agricultural workforce communities;

1 (o) Explore development of an agricultural workforce education
2 safety program to improve the understanding about leaving an area
3 being sprayed; and

4 (p) Work with the industry and the agricultural workforce to
5 improve protocols and best practices for use of personal safety
6 equipment for applicators and reflective gear for the general
7 workforce.

8 (6) The committee must provide a report to the appropriate
9 committees of the legislature by May 1, 2020, and each year
10 thereafter. An initial report on the progress of the committee must
11 be provided in January 2020. The report may include recommendations
12 the committee determines necessary, and must document the activities
13 of the committee and report on the subjects listed in subsection (5)
14 of this section. The department of health and the department of
15 agriculture must provide staff support to the committee for the
16 purpose of authoring the report and transmitting it to the
17 legislature. Any member of the committee may provide a minority
18 report as an appendix to the report submitted to the legislature
19 under this section.

20 (7) This section expires July 1, 2025.

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