

VETO MESSAGE ON SSB 6263

March 7, 1996

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Substitute Senate Bill No. 6263 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the normal and usual use of equine and oxen;"

In 1994 a broad spectrum of interest groups participated in the comprehensive overhaul of Washington State animal cruelty laws under Chapter 16.52 RCW. A standard that a person at a minimum knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence inflict unnecessary pain or suffering upon an animal, fail to provide food and other necessities, or abandon the animal was agreed upon as a reasonable general threshold for culpability.

Exclusions for rodeos and fairs, due to the unique and special nature of those events, were provided in the 1994 law. Any new exclusions to this law should be carefully and narrowly tailored to address specific problems or areas of concern.

The exclusions from animal cruelty laws provided in Substitute Senate Bill No. 6263 for "the normal and usual use of equine and oxen for logging, riding, showing, vaulting, driving or drafting purposes" appear overly broad and could unnecessarily allow otherwise unacceptable acts of animal cruelty.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6263 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Lowry
Governor