

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5620

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture, February 27, 2003

Title: An act relating to levying an assessment on certain agricultural plants.

Brief Description: Levying an assessment on certain agricultural plants.

Sponsors: Senators Brandland, Swecker and Rasmussen; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture: 2/11/03, 2/27/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Swecker, Chair; Brandland, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, Rasmussen and Sheahan.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: Initiative 601, approved by voters in November 1993, contains a provision that requires any fee increase in excess of the fiscal growth factor to receive prior legislative approval. The fiscal growth factor is the sum of the percentage increase in inflation plus the percentage increase in the state population.

Growers and other purchasers of fruit tree planting stock currently pay a 1 percent assessment on the wholesale price of fruit. The funds are used for the grapevine and fruit tree certification programs and the nursery improvement program.

The current assessment generates approximately \$200,000 per year. The fee is set in rule. To increase fees by more than the fiscal growth factor in any one year, an agency needs prior legislative authorization.

Summary of Bill: The annual assessment for fruit tree planting stocks certification program may be increased in excess of the fiscal growth factor for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill affects seven segments of the agricultural industry and each segment supports the bill. The bill is needed to assure diseases and pest do not infect root stocks.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Leslie Emerick, Tom Wessels, WSDA (pro).