

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action: Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed

Vote: 5 - 0 - 0

Yeas: George, Schrader, Starr, Verger, Metsger

Nays: -

Exc.: -

Prepared By: Jim Stembridge, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 3/11, 3/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Changes membership composition of the Oregon Wheat Commission. Authorizes Oregon Wheat Commission to create up to two additional voting members on the commission for representatives of the wheat industry and to eliminate the public member position in association with refunds of assessment. Changes processes for appointing and removing members. Requires nonpublic members of the Commission to have been actually engaged in growing wheat for the previous five years. Directs Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture to make all applications for appointment to the Oregon Wheat Commission available to wheat grower organizations and to take into consideration rankings and recommendations made by wheat grower organizations prior to making appointments to the commission. Requires public hearing and contested case hearing prior to removal of a commission member by the Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, unless waived by the member.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Mandatory vs. voluntary check-offs
- Industry membership, including cooperative, exporter, purchaser points of view
- Tax at five cents per bushel and refunds on advertising/promotion campaigns
- Removal of public member and relationship with refundability offers

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Deletes Commission option to retain independent contractor as Commission administrator. Deletes Commission authority to contract for nondiscretionary functions.

BACKGROUND: In 1947, the Oregon Wheat Commission was created to promote Pacific Northwest wheats in overseas markets and to support research laboratories to develop varieties and enhance qualities, production, and increase yields. The Commission's work is supported by a tax deducted at the first point of sale. The 2009-2009 budget amounts to over \$1 million. The Commission invests the assessment funds in international market development programs to provide market maintenance, advocacy of food aid programs and crisis management efforts in partnership with U.S. Wheat Associates, the Wheat Marketing Center and trade policy organizations. Also, the Commission evaluates and funds research proposals from all qualified organizations, including Oregon State University. The Commission, with offices in Portland, continues to operate under the Oregon Department of Agriculture, funded by wheat growers and guided by five wheat farmers and one public member. The Commission re-structuring under SB 639-A represents agreement between the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Wheat Growers League.

3/25/2009 3:08:00 PM

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.