



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 516

Chairperson: Philip Erdman
Committee: Agriculture
Date of Hearing: February 6, 2007

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 516 adopts the Corporate Farming Policy Advisory Act to provide a forum and process for examining state policy with regard to the extent that corporations and other limited liability entities may own agricultural assets and engage in farming and ranching.

The bill provides for the appointment of the Corporate Farming Policy Advisory Council assigned two specific tasks:

- 1) to identify policy instruments available to assert public policy in this regard, including if appropriate or necessary, revisions of the "I-300" corporate farming restrictions at Article XII, Section 8 of the state constitution, and;
- 2) to develop a Corporate Farming Policy plan to be presented to the Legislature and, where appropriate, the electorate. Such plan is to encompass utilization of policy instruments identified in the first phase of the Council's work in order to advance public policy objectives of preserving dispersed ownership of farming and ranching operations in family farmers and to promote responsible stewardship of natural resources. The plan shall also evaluate corporate farming policy in relation to ability of producers to meet modern production challenges, to facilitate intergenerational transfers of agricultural assets, to access capital and manage risk, to and to join cooperatively with other producers.

The bill provides for selection of appointed membership of the Council by the Governor and the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee and ex-officio membership of state government officials to facilitate flow of information to the Council. The bill provides for a schedule of meetings, public information gathering and reporting of findings and recommendations. The Council is assigned to the Department of Agriculture for administrative purposes only. The Council is to be assisted by a facilitator and authorization for consultation and input of expertise relevant to the work of the Council.

LB 516 is intended as a process for engaging the agricultural community and the citizenry of the state in a dialogue to arrive at a consensus and carefully crafted plan to realize opportunities for production agriculture consistent with other public policy objectives in response to legal challenges.

Principal Introducer:

Philip Erdman, Chairperson
Committee on Agriculture