1. Policy Recommendation: Base state regulation of agriculture on enacted law, not on rulings in lawsuits

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the Washington state economy. The state has four attributes that make it a food production powerhouse: a diverse climate, rich soil, abundant water and hard-working people. Throughout Washington’s history, agriculture has been central to the state’s development and economic success. Currently, agricultural businesses add $51 billion a year to the state’s annual productivity, and the agricultural sector makes up more than 13 percent of the state’s economy.¹

Generating jobs and tax revenue

More than 300 different crops are grown in Washington, a diversity of food production second only to California’s. More than 39,000 farms are located in Washington, from the fertile valleys of Snohomish County to the drier areas of Eastern Washington. The counties that play the largest role in the agricultural economy are Grant and Yakima, which are home to 4,700 farms and $3.41 billion yearly in combined economic output.²

There are more than 200 food processing companies in the state and the number of people working in farming and food processing surpasses 160,000, more than the combined in-state employment of

---
Microsoft and Boeing.³

In addition to economic output, farm families contribute enormously in yearly revenue to local communities and to the state to fund essential public services. To cite just one example, property taxes paid by farmers and agricultural businesses exceed $230 million per year.⁴

Confusing network of regulations

Farmers prefer to spend their time in the fields or tending livestock, but their productive time is often consumed with bureaucratic red tape from Olympia or with legal action brought by political activists located in cities hundreds of miles away. The result is a confusing and constantly-shifting network of burdens and restrictions imposed by judges and regulators.

Instead of being governed by reasonable laws enacted by their elected representatives, farm families find themselves subjected to arbitrary dictates imposed by distant and aggressive political interests.

In recent legislative sessions, lawmakers have considered bills to improve the regulation of agricultural production based on enacted legal authority. This policy approach has the support of legislators of both parties and would give farmers clear direction about the state’s rules for growing and producing food.⁵

---

For example, the proposed bipartisan approach would put the regulation of water quality associated with animal feed operations, like dairies, under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Ecology and state Department of Agriculture. These agencies would be specifically directed to write rules clearly based on state laws.

**Basing regulation on clearly-defined law**

Radical environmental groups oppose this approach because it would limit their ability to sue farmers in court and put family dairies out of business. A paid lobbyist for the Sierra Club said the state Department of Agriculture should not regulate Washington’s dairies, because the agency’s mission is to “promote agriculture.”

Hostile attitudes like this make it impossible for farmers to produce food within a system of commonsense and predictable regulation. Lawmakers should ensure that state rules for agriculture are founded on clearly-defined laws, not the unpredictable and controversial rulings imposed by the courts and executive branch agencies.

---

2. Policy Recommendation: Do not impose a mandatory cap-and-reduce system on food production

Governor Jay Inslee said he wants to impose caps on greenhouse gas emissions from refineries and food producers. The regulations would target fertilizer makers and food processing facilities in Eastern Washington, raising costs and reducing job opportunities, with little or no environmental benefit.

The governor said he wants to impose fines of up to $10,000 a day. In addition, the governor wants to encourage companies that close operations and cut jobs in Washington to sell credits for carbon reductions beyond the targets set in the regulation. Essentially, the governor says he wants to punish refinery owners and food producers for keeping jobs in the state, and to pay them for sending jobs elsewhere.

Under the proposed rules, food producers would find that selling carbon credits created by the state would be more profitable than creating jobs and producing food for consumers. Yet the amount of estimated carbon reduction would be so small it would have almost no impact on global climate trends.

The governor’s policy approach would work directly against the public interest in Washington, and would particularly hurt families and workers in the state’s agricultural sector. Lawmakers should avoid this top-down policy approach, because it would impose a heavy burden on Washington citizens while doing little for the environment.

---

3. Policy Recommendation: Maintain public access to Washington ports

Washington farmers produce food for a global market. Government agencies operate a system of modern port facilities built and maintained in part with tax money. Without public access to the state’s ports, Washington’s agricultural sector would shrink to a fraction of its current size.

In 2014, the state exported more than $16 billion worth of food and agricultural products to people around the world, half of which was grown or raised in Washington. To cite one example, Washington is a top exporter of food to Asia. Beneficiaries of Washington crops include people in Japan, China, South Korea and the Philippines. Modern transport allows Washington farmers to improve nutrition and vary the diets of millions of people worldwide.

The ports of Seattle, Tacoma and Longview are major shipping points for Washington products, in addition to goods transported from other states. Further, all-weather highways and the barge system on the Columbia and Snake rivers allow swift and safe shipment of farm produce. These are public facilities, built and maintained for the purpose of allowing the people of Washington to connect with the world.

Port shutdown hurts growers

The ability of growers to move products came to an abrupt halt in 2014 and 2015 because of strikes. Union action shut down West Coast ports, resulting in millions of dollars in lost revenue for farmers and other food producers. Tons of fresh fruit and vegetables rotted in warehouses at 29 ports along the West Coast during the strike. Washington state apple growers, for example, lost

---

an estimated $100 million.\textsuperscript{9}

Overall, in-state businesses lost an estimated $769.5 million during the port shutdown.\textsuperscript{10} Not included in this estimate is the loss of global market share for Washington growers, which may take years for them to recover.

The port slowdown dragged on for many months without action by state or federal officials to intervene, as they had done in previous port disputes.\textsuperscript{11} The controversy had nothing to do with the private market. It occurred at facilities built and operated by government agencies. The lack of action by public officials caused even greater financial loss for Washington’s farm families and businesses.

As a matter of policy, lawmakers and federal officials should ensure the public has regular and dependable access to Washington ports and that these public facilities are protected from unions and damaging labor disputes. The public interest of Washington’s agricultural communities should not suffer because of the narrow economic agenda of organized labor or any other special interest.

4. Policy Recommendation: Consider the policy needs of agriculture equally with other key economic sectors

As mentioned, agricultural production is a major segment of the state economy, yet policymakers often overlook the needs of farmers and agricultural workers when setting tax and economic policy. Elected officials often prefer to be seen as champions of perceived cutting-edge sectors such as aerospace, medical research or digital technology. Moreover, population distribution means that policymaking in Washington is often dominated by elected representatives from the Seattle area and the more urbanized Western part of the state.

Washington farmers help feed the world

Yet farming communities are far more productive than people living in cities may believe. Although located in a mid-sized state, Washington farmers are among the top agricultural producers in the country. Simply put, Washington farmers help feed the world. Examples of Washington production include:

**Apples:** Washington state leads the country in apple production, with a yearly value that exceeds $2 billion (2013).\(^{12}\) No other state comes close to Washington’s apple yield, which comprises more than 66 percent of total U.S. production.

**Potatoes:** Washington is a top producer of potatoes, a staple in the diets of people around the world. Nearly 20 percent of total U.S. production comes from the Evergreen state, compared to 24 percent from Idaho, the nation’s top

---

producer.\textsuperscript{13}

**Raspberries:** Among all agricultural commodities, the red raspberry market is one in which Washington state produces the largest share – more than 90 percent of the nation’s total production.\textsuperscript{14}

**Wine:** After decades of research and investment, Washington state is now home to a thriving wine industry, with more than 850 wineries. Wine grape growing areas now exceed 50,000 acres. The state ranks second only to California in total wine grape production.\textsuperscript{15} In quality Washington wines compare favorably with the finest wines in the world.

**Reducing regulation and protecting resources**

Research by the state Department of Agriculture found that farmers believe lawmakers should make agriculture a priority, eliminate regulatory barriers, protect natural resources, strengthen support services, and harness emerging technologies.\textsuperscript{16}

Whether policymakers are following these recommendations is a source of great debate in Olympia and across Washington’s farming communities. Placing additional regulatory burdens on the

state’s farm families certainly does not reduce regulatory barriers. Based on their actions, it is unclear whether state policymakers have truly made Washington agriculture a top priority.

Washington’s farm families and food processors do much more than provide economic benefit to the state. They provide food security, and they are often stewards of public lands and public resources.

**Making agriculture a priority**

State leaders should ensure that agricultural productivity is a priority in Olympia, and is considered equally with high-tech, software, aerospace, biomedical research and other key industries when setting tax, regulatory and economic policy for Washington state.

**Additional Resources**


PAUL GUPPY | Vice President for Research

Paul Guppy is a graduate of Seattle University and holds graduate degrees from Claremont Graduate University and the London School of Economics. He worked for 12 years in the U.S. Congress as a Chief of Staff and Legislative Director. He writes extensively on tax policy, public finance and other issues. He is a frequent commentator on radio and TV news programs, and in newspapers across the state.

LIV FINNE | Director, Center for Education

Liv Finne is a graduate of Wellesley College and Boston University Law School. She is retired from civil litigation practice and is a partner in the small business she owns with her husband. She is the author of An Option for Learning: An Assessment of Student Achievement in Charter Public Schools; and An Education Reform Plan: Eight Practical Ways to Improve Public Schools. She is the founder and primary author of Washington Policy Center’s widely-read education blog.
Chris Cargill graduated from Gonzaga University with a degree in broadcast communications and political science. He worked as a TV news producer for 10 years and is an ex-officio member of the Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce. He has served on the Spokane Regional Transportation Commission Advisory Committee and currently serves on the Spokane Mayor’s Advisory Council on Small Business. He is the author of numerous policy studies on Eastern Washington issues and is a frequent guest host and commentator on news radio stations.

Jason Mercier is a graduate of Washington State University and serves on the board of the Washington Coalition for Open Government and Candidate Verification. He is also an ex-officio member of the Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce. He worked with lawmakers to create the state’s renowned budget transparency website www.fiscal.wa.gov. In 2010, Governor Gregoire appointed him to the state Fiscal Responsibility and Reform Panel. He has testified numerous times before legislative committees on government reform issues, and his commentary and op-eds appear regularly on T.V., radio and in newspapers around the state.
Todd Myers holds a Master’s degree from the University of Washington, and he served as Director of Public Relations for the Seattle SuperSonics and the Seattle Mariners. He served on the executive team at the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and is currently a member of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council. Todd is one of the nation’s leading experts on free-market environmental policy. He is the author of *Eco-Fads: How the Rise of Trendy Environmentalism Is Harming the Environment*, and is a commentator for energy and environmental policy for *The Wall Street Journal*.

Bob Pishue graduated from Central Washington University with a degree in economics. He worked at the Washington Research Council where he produced policy briefs on initiatives and referenda. He worked for eight years as Information Technology Manager and Human Resources Manager for a Bellevue-based retailer. For three years he was Director of the Coles Center for Transportation at WPC and was a major contributor to this Policy Guide. He now works at INRIX company.
ERIN SHANNON | Director, Center for Small Business and Labor Reform

Erin Shannon holds a degree in political science from the University of Washington. She served as Public Relations Director of the state’s largest small business trade association, and was the spokesperson for several pro-small business initiative campaigns. Erin has testified numerous times before legislative committees on small business issues. Her op-eds appear regularly in newspapers around the state, including *The Seattle Times* and *The Puget Sound Business Journal*, and she has appeared on several national radio and T.V. programs including Fox News, CNN Money, and “Stossel with John Stossel” on the Fox Business Channel. She is the director of WPC’s Olympia office.

DR. ROGER STARK | Director, Center for Health Care Reform

Dr. Roger Stark is a retired physician and a graduate of the University of Nebraska’s College of Medicine. He is a co-founder of the open heart surgery program at Overlake Hospital and he has served on the hospital’s governing board and as Board Chair for the Overlake Hospital Foundation. He is the author of two books, including *The Patient-Centered Solution: Our Health Care Crisis, How It Happened, and How We Can Fix It*. Dr. Stark has testified before Congress on the Affordable Care Act and he speaks frequently on health care issues to civic groups across the state. He currently serves on the Board of the Washington Liability Reform Coalition and is an active member of the Woodinville Rotary.
### Board of Directors
(as of 5/1/2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Craig Williamson, Chairman</th>
<th>Daniel Mead Smith, President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Alvord</td>
<td>John S. Otter, Vice-Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Baldwin</td>
<td>Mark Pinkowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Barber</td>
<td>Greg Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Bowlin</td>
<td>Sarah Rindlaub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artie Buerk</td>
<td>Phil Scott Schlaepfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Coles</td>
<td>Irene Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Conner</td>
<td>Hon. Brian Sonntag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Connors</td>
<td>Heidi Stanley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Connors</td>
<td>Randy Talbot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Cowles</td>
<td>Robert Tippett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon. Kemper Freeman, Jr.</td>
<td>Janet True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John J. Hennessy</td>
<td>Roberta Weymouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt McIlwain</td>
<td>Wayne Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon. George R. Nethercutt, Jr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon. Mary Odermat</td>
<td>Len Zarelli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Eastern Washington Advisory Board
(as of 5/1/2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brenda Alford</th>
<th>Larry Lambeth</th>
<th>Mike Poulson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Beil</td>
<td>Kate Lampson</td>
<td>Tom Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Benjamin</td>
<td>William Lampson</td>
<td>Steve Schwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Bowlin</td>
<td>Steve Landon</td>
<td>Janet Schmidkofer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna Cable</td>
<td>Jordana LaPorte</td>
<td>Chris Senske</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Cannon</td>
<td>Jeff Losey</td>
<td>Jeff Severs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Clausen</td>
<td>Lori Mattson</td>
<td>Julie Shiflett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Cowles</td>
<td>Jack McRae</td>
<td>Bruce Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Devaney</td>
<td>Stuart McDougall</td>
<td>Mark Sonderen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Dias</td>
<td>Dr. Blake McKinley</td>
<td>Don Stafford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Dix</td>
<td>Todd Mielke</td>
<td>Heidi Stanley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Farris</td>
<td>Heidi Myers</td>
<td>Peter Stanton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Gold</td>
<td>Hon. George R. Nethercutt, Jr.</td>
<td>Tyrus Tenold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Gray</td>
<td>Joed Ngaruiya</td>
<td>Robert Tippett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Hastings</td>
<td>Chris Patterson</td>
<td>Cindy Wendle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Hix</td>
<td>Joseph “Vic” Parrish</td>
<td>Judi Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Jankelson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wayne Williams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INVEST IN IDEAS
MEMBERSHIP CLUBS

Your generous donation to WPC qualifies you for annual membership benefits!

WPC Member—$50 - $999
Members receive all of our research publication mailings, our quarterly Viewpoint magazine, regular email updates and invitations to general WPC events.

Patron Member—$1,000 - $4,999
Same benefits as WPC Member and invitations to private WPC events, recognition in our Annual Report and quarterly updates from our President.

Benefactor Member—$5,000 - $9,999
Same benefits as Patron Member and exclusive Benefactor lapel pin and private briefings from our President and Board Chairman.

President’s Council Member—$10,000+
Same benefits as Benefactor Member and exclusive President’s Council lapel pin, annual recognition in our quarterly Viewpoint magazine, invitations to exclusive conference call updates on the Legislative Session and elections with WPC’s VP of Research, Paul Guppy, and complementary admission to WPC general events.

Pillar Society Member
Same benefits as Presidents Council Member and VIP tickets or a table at WPC’s Annual Dinner, invitation to Private Annual Dinner Lunch and Private Meeting, recognition at all WPC events, exclusive Pillar Society name badge and invitation to private Pillar Society exclusive events.

Young Professionals Member: $100
For WPC supporters under 40 years old, same benefits as Patron Member and receive our monthly e-newsletter The INK, invitations to our YP exclusive events and discounted or free tickets to all WPC general events.

Washington Policy Center is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. To preserve our independence, we accept no government funding, and we do not perform contract work. Contributions are deductible for federal income tax purposes as allowed by law. Our tax-id # is 91-1752769.
Yes, I am proud to support Washington Policy Center with a gift of:

☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $250  ☐ $500  ☐ $1,000  ☐ Other: $ ____

Name_____________________________________________________

Address:___________________________________________________

City: ________________________ State:________ Zip ____________

Email: ____________________________________________________

Phone:____________________________________________________

Payment Information:

☐ My check payable to Washington Policy Center is enclosed

☐ Please charge my:

  ☐ Visa      ☐ Mastercard      ☐ AMEX

  Name: ____________________________________________________

  Card Number: __________________________________________

  Exp. Date: ________________ Today’s Date: ______________

  Signature: ____________________________________________

Donate online at washingtonpolicy.org/Donate

or mail this reply card to PO Box 3643, Seattle WA 98124
The Policy Guide for Washington State is seen on legislators’ desks throughout the capitol—from both sides of the aisle. It provides real solutions and reforms for the biggest problems that the state faces. I’ve drawn on the Policy Guide both as an uninformed candidate and now as a seasoned legislator. It’s a must read and must have for all legislators and candidates!

- Senator Andy Hill
  Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair

About the Policy Guide for Washington State

The 5th edition of the Policy Guide for Washington State provides updated information and insight about a range of important issues, including budget and taxes, environment, agriculture, health care, education, small business and transportation.

Typical users of the Policy Guide are state lawmakers, public agency managers, city and county officials, reporters for print, broadcast and online media, and the general public. News organizations commonly use Washington Policy Center research when covering public issues.

The Policy Guide provides both a reference to current issues and a practical guide to the best policy ideas and reforms needed in our state. It provides clear and specific policy recommendations that policymakers can adopt as their main priorities. The recommendations are based on approaches the research indicates would make the greatest positive difference for the people of our state. The priorities presented here are designed to lead to better governance and promote policies that improve the lives of all Washingtonians.

"From agriculture to transportation, Washington Policy Center’s Policy Guide provides me and other elected officials with critical recommendations that we use to move our state and country in a positive governing direction."

- Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers
  Chair of the House Republican Conference

About the Policy Guide for Washington State

The 5th edition of the Policy Guide for Washington State provides updated information and insight about a range of important issues, including budget and taxes, environment, agriculture, health care, education, small business and transportation.

Typical users of the Policy Guide are state lawmakers, public agency managers, city and county officials, reporters for print, broadcast and online media, and the general public. News organizations commonly use Washington Policy Center research when covering public issues.

The Policy Guide provides both a reference to current issues and a practical guide to the best policy ideas and reforms needed in our state. It provides clear and specific policy recommendations that policymakers can adopt as their main priorities. The recommendations are based on approaches the research indicates would make the greatest positive difference for the people of our state. The priorities presented here are designed to lead to better governance and promote policies that improve the lives of all Washingtonians.

“From agriculture to transportation, Washington Policy Center’s Policy Guide provides me and other elected officials with critical recommendations that we use to move our state and country in a positive governing direction.”

- Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers
  Chair of the House Republican Conference

About the Policy Guide for Washington State

The 5th edition of the Policy Guide for Washington State provides updated information and insight about a range of important issues, including budget and taxes, environment, agriculture, health care, education, small business and transportation.

Typical users of the Policy Guide are state lawmakers, public agency managers, city and county officials, reporters for print, broadcast and online media, and the general public. News organizations commonly use Washington Policy Center research when covering public issues.

The Policy Guide provides both a reference to current issues and a practical guide to the best policy ideas and reforms needed in our state. It provides clear and specific policy recommendations that policymakers can adopt as their main priorities. The recommendations are based on approaches the research indicates would make the greatest positive difference for the people of our state. The priorities presented here are designed to lead to better governance and promote policies that improve the lives of all Washingtonians.

“From agriculture to transportation, Washington Policy Center’s Policy Guide provides me and other elected officials with critical recommendations that we use to move our state and country in a positive governing direction.”

- Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers
  Chair of the House Republican Conference

About the Policy Guide for Washington State

The 5th edition of the Policy Guide for Washington State provides updated information and insight about a range of important issues, including budget and taxes, environment, agriculture, health care, education, small business and transportation.

Typical users of the Policy Guide are state lawmakers, public agency managers, city and county officials, reporters for print, broadcast and online media, and the general public. News organizations commonly use Washington Policy Center research when covering public issues.

The Policy Guide provides both a reference to current issues and a practical guide to the best policy ideas and reforms needed in our state. It provides clear and specific policy recommendations that policymakers can adopt as their main priorities. The recommendations are based on approaches the research indicates would make the greatest positive difference for the people of our state. The priorities presented here are designed to lead to better governance and promote policies that improve the lives of all Washingtonians.

“From agriculture to transportation, Washington Policy Center’s Policy Guide provides me and other elected officials with critical recommendations that we use to move our state and country in a positive governing direction.”

- Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers
  Chair of the House Republican Conference