



Washington Association of Wheat Growers

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2018 State Priorities

PRESERVING RURAL DEVELOPMENT BY PROTECTING THE USE OF EXEMPT WELLS

A Washington State Supreme Court decision known as the *Hirst* decision has created uncertainty over development in rural areas by restricting the use of exempt wells. Maintaining affordable access to water for rural areas is imperative for economic development. **A permanent legislative fix is needed to allow for the use of exempt wells in rural areas.**

PROTECT EXISTING TAX POLICY

Retaining all food and farm-related tax incentives are critical to the agricultural industry. Agriculture tax incentives are a valuable benefit to our economy and offer farmers a more level playing field with other major ag production states. Incentives are intended to be a long-term state investment into the agricultural industry.

PRESERVING WASHINGTON’S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Carbon policies should ensure that Washington State retains its economic competitiveness and not disadvantage Washington farmers. Carbon taxes will raise fuel, fertilizer, transportation and processing costs. Farmers cannot pass these costs on. Any carbon policies should factor in the significant benefit that agricultural soils sequester and store carbon through sustainable farming practices.

WAWG opposes mandatory reporting of agricultural pesticide use prior to application to governmental agencies and neighboring parties that are not feasible to allow farmers to promptly protect their crops from disease and weather changes. The crop protection industry is one of the most highly regulated in the nation, and EPA safety review involves over 100 toxicology and environmental studies to ensure the safety of products.

Our transportation system moved nearly 143 million bushels of wheat in 2017 efficiently through a system of roads, rail and waterways, while reducing highway gridlock and harmful emissions. **WAWG supports funding to maintain and make improvements to rural Washington roads, river, and rail systems.**

Snake River dams are vital to Washington’s ag economy and transportation infrastructure and should remain intact. Nearly 67 million bushels of wheat are transported on the Columbia/Snake Rivers, alleviating the burden on our road and rail systems. Timely, cost-competitive shipping is critical to our industry’s ability to market our wheat globally.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF WASHINGTON STATE AGRICULTURE

Plant Sciences Building at WSU Pullman Campus. This major facility will continue progress towards building the research and education complex. A new, modern facility is needed to enable WSU to carry out more cutting-edge plant science research. WAWG also supports the **Global Animal Health Phase II at WSU Pullman Campus** in order to maintain the state’s only animal disease diagnostic lab. Both buildings were funded in the negotiated capital budget which WAWG supports.

WAWG supports a legislative change to recognize the body of work that Washington State Crop Improvement Association (an agency of WSDA) does for foundation seed production as seed certification.

THE WASHINGTON WHEAT INDUSTRY:

- Family wheat farms are one of the largest economic drivers of jobs in Eastern Washington.
- The Washington wheat industry contributed \$657 million in production value to the state’s economy in 2016.
- Agriculture is the state’s second largest export category of products shipped through Washington ports.
- Approximately 90% of the state’s grain is exported primarily to Asian markets such as The Philippines, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.
- The wheat industry creates a trade surplus for our state and offers the most dependable, high quality grain around the world.

OUTPUT AND EMPLOYMENT CONTRIBUTIONS OF WHEAT PRODUCTION TO THE WASHINGTON ECONOMY:

Washington Wheat Exports	\$	625,500,000
Indirect Output	\$	459,750,300
Induced Output	\$	172,587,300
TOTAL ECONOMIC OUTPUT	\$	1,257,837,600
Direct Employment		1,904
Indirect Employment		3,836
Induced Employment		1,120
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT		6,860

Source: WSU SES IMPACT Center, 2014 data