

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1532
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There is an increased concern for the safety of the domestic food supply. It is important to educate and improve awareness among fresh fruit and vegetable producers on proper food handling procedures. Currently, there is no law requiring food inspections or regulations by the state.

As proposed, S.B. 1532 establishes the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) as the lead agency in matters concerning food regulation and requires TDA to coordinate, plan, and approve training and awareness programs among producers of fresh fruits and vegetables in this state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to any state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. (1) Provides that the legislature finds that the agricultural industry is a vital part of the state's economy, contributing \$73 billion annually, or 9.5 percent of the gross state product, and is the state's second largest industry, with one in every seven Texans being employed in some segment of the agricultural industry.

(2) Provides that the legislature finds that food safety must be a top state priority because an accidental or deliberate contamination of food or crops could be detrimental to the states' economy and would undermine consumer confidence in the integrity of food safety in this state.

(3) Provides that the legislature finds that the growing and processing of fresh fruits and vegetables is crucial to this state, and since September 11, 2001, awareness of the threat of contamination of those products has increased.

(4) Provides that the legislature finds that the state should increase awareness of food safety among the state's growers and processors of fresh fruits and vegetables to avoid disastrous events.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 91, Agriculture Code, by adding Section 91.009, as follows:

Sec. 91.009. COORDINATION. (a) Provides that the Department of Agriculture (department) is the lead agency in the regulation of food safety in fresh fruits and vegetables, including and any federally mandated inspections of farms and fresh-cut processing facilities, and is responsible for coordinating the activities of state and federal agencies with regard to such regulation.

(b) Requires the department to coordinate, plan, and approve training and awareness programs among producers of fresh fruits and vegetables in this state. Requires the program to inform and educate producers about proper food handling procedures, the prevention of accidental or deliberately planned outbreaks of disease, and the enhancement of overall food safety. Requires the department to coordinate with colleges, universities, the Texas Agricultural

Experiment Station, the Texas Cooperative Extension Service, and private industry to jointly plan and approve programs required under this subsection.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2007.