



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Concise Explanatory Statement
for amendments to
Chapter 16-462 WAC
Grape Planting Stock – Registration and Certification

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) held a hearing on September 23, 2020 to accept testimony on its proposal to amend chapter 16-462 WAC. Due to the mandated social distancing requirements in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, the hearings were held solely over video and teleconference. Proposed amendments to chapter 16-462 WAC include:

1. Clarifying the circumstances under which Generation 2 mother plants which are more than two years old, can continue to be used to propagate Generation 3 grapevines;
2. Requiring retesting of soil after fumigation to control the presence of nematodes of the genus *Xiphinema*, to prove efficacy of the treatment;
3. Decreasing the number of required inspections of certified grape planting stock (Generation 4) from three times per year to only twice per year;
4. Requiring virus sampling and testing for all registered (Generation 2/Generation 3) grapevines on a five-year rotation;
5. Removing the requirement that program participants have to use paper certification tags provided by the department;
6. Removing the requirement that certified grape planting stock (Generation 4) adhere to certain grades and standards specified in WAC 16-462-055 when offered for sale; and
7. Moving the annual application due date for registration and certification from January 1st to January 10th.

Reasons for Adopting the Rule

To support and strengthen the state's grape industry, the Washington State Dept. of Agriculture (WSDA) has maintained the Grape Planting Stock Registration and Certification Program as an important tool to limit harmful pest introductions and reduce their spread. This voluntary program has been revised several times since it was established in 1968, to address new pest threats and the changing needs of a rapidly evolving grape industry. The program supports the availability of virus-tested grape planting stock, free of economically important grapevine virus diseases and pests. It is intended to produce healthier vineyards, long-lived vines, and enhanced yields. Participating growers may see a market premium for vines produced through the grapevine certification program, and a wider market for interstate and foreign export. Starting with certified, healthy plant material is key to the cost-effective production of grapes.

In May 2015, the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service funded a grant, managed by the Washington Wine Industry Foundation, called "Harmonizing Protocols in the Northwest – A Pilot Project Driven by Stakeholders." The grant

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project utilized grape industry stakeholders to drive development of a harmonized approach to grapevine virus certification, quarantines, and regulatory programs across multiple states. After a draft certification standard was developed, the Washington Winegrowers Association petitioned the department to modify the rules to adopt these standards. The resulting proposed rule amendment will create a regional approach for grapevine virus certification, as well as harmonize quarantines and regulatory programs for grapevine nursery stock certification in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The main anticipated effects from these changes include the retesting of soil for nematodes after fumigation for new G2 planting sites and the sampling and testing of all registered grapevines on a five-year rotation.

Summary of Comments and the Department's Response

The public comment period ran from August 19, 2020, until the close of business on September 23, 2020. During that time, two written comments were received regarding the proposed amendments. No oral comments were received.

The following summarizes the testimony:

Scott Crownover – representing Skagit Horticulture submitted written comment regarding the proposal. Mr. Crownover stated, “Skagit Horticulture is a propagator and supplier of certified virus-indexed grapevines to the Washington wine grape grower industry. On behalf of that industry, I would like to express support for Washington State Department of Agriculture’s proposed changes to Chapter 16-462 WAC, Grape Planting Stock – Registration and Certification.”

Response: Thank you for your support.

Vicky Scharlau – representing the Washington Winegrowers Association submitted written comment regarding the proposal. Ms. Scharlau stated, “The Washington Winegrowers Association represents the interests of commercial wine grape production in the State of Washington and has a membership of over 1000 growers and vintners. On behalf of our members and the industry at large, I would like to express our support for Washington State Department of Agriculture’s proposed changes to Chapter 16-462 WAC, Grape Planting Stock -- Registration and Certification....”

Response: Thank you for your support.

Differences Between the Proposed and Adopted Rule

There are no differences between the proposed and adopted rule.