



PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY

**CR-101 (October 2017)
(Implements RCW 34.05.310)**

Do **NOT** use for expedited rule making

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DATE: September 02, 2020

TIME: 8:55 AM

WSR 20-18-090

Agency: Dept. of Agriculture

Subject of possible rule making: Chapter 16-470 WAC, Quarantine – Agricultural Pests. The department is considering adding all species in the genus *Vespa* (hornet) to the list of quarantined pests.

Statutes authorizing the agency to adopt rules on this subject: RCW 17.24.011, 17.24.021, and 17.24.041.

Reasons why rules on this subject may be needed and what they might accomplish: The department has determined that hornets pose a direct and indirect risk to agricultural crops in Washington State. Hornets have been known to feed on fruit such as pears, peaches, plums, grapes, berries, and apples making the fruit unfit for human consumption. Hornets attack honey bees and other native insect populations. Managed honey bees and other native insects are important pollinators that are vital to the production of agriculture. Many crops within the state, such as fruits, vegetables, and crops for livestock feed, depend on these insects for reproduction. Pollination also contributes to higher crop yields, making these insects economically valuable to Washington's agricultural industry. If hornets were to become established within the state, there could be dire economic and ecological impacts.

Hornets can pose a risk to human health. The venom in their sting can be toxic and unlike bees, they can sting repeatedly. A sting from a hornet can cause substantial pain, as well as tissue damage. In some extremely rare cases, death can also occur. Although they generally do not target people, they can attack when threatened. Hornets eat ripe fruit, which could put fruit harvesters at a higher risk of getting stung.

International and interstate shipping has led to a greater potential for the distribution of hornets into the state. Mated queens often seek sheltered locations in which to undergo diapause (a dormant period). These locations are sometimes on items which are transported, making it easier for the species to spread to new areas. In the past few years, multiple detections have occurred, with Oriental hornet (*Vespa orientalis*) being found in Washington and *Vespa soror* found in neighboring Vancouver, B.C. In 2019 and 2020, there were multiple detections of Asian giant hornet (*Vespa mandarinia*) in Washington and Vancouver, B.C. Certain hornet species have a greater likelihood of becoming established once introduced into the state. This is due to Washington's climate and other environmental factors which result in a suitable habitat. For some hornet species, there is a lack of scientific information available. However, there are characteristic traits that all hornets possess, which makes it prudent to quarantine all species. No species of hornet are native to Washington State and managing an invasive population once it is established is challenging and costly. Any hornet introduction could upset the state's ecosystem in a number of ways, including spreading new pathogens and parasites to native wasps, bees, and yellow jackets.

Adding quarantine regulations for hornets will make it unlawful to intentionally bring or move their live life stages into or through the state without a special permit; this restriction is necessary for the department to properly regulate and eradicate introductions of this pest.

Identify other federal and state agencies that regulate this subject and the process coordinating the rule with these agencies: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Process for developing new rule (check all that apply):

Negotiated rule making

Pilot rule making

Agency study

Other (describe) Department staff will discuss any proposed amendments with affected stakeholders. Affected stakeholders will also have an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposed rules during the public comment period and will be able to present oral testimony at the public hearing.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting:

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Additional comments:

Date: 9/2/2020

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Signature:

