VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5602-S

May 17, 2005

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Section 2, Substitute Senate Bill No. 5602 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to managing livestock nutrients."

This bill directs the Departments of Agriculture and Ecology, together with legislators and affected and interested parties, to jointly develop recommendations for changes to the law to establish a single state livestock nutrient program within the Department of Agriculture.

The bill also calls for rules that will allow disclosure of farm plan information to provide meaningful information to the public while protecting confidential business information. It will also establish composting guidelines to ensure safe farm practices for disposal of dead animals in a way that protects animal health, water supplies and food supplies.

Section 2 of the bill amends the membership of the Development and Oversight Committee that works with the Department of Agriculture on this program. It also assigns them a couple new tasks, one of which would direct the agency and committee to develop nutrient management tools for smaller livestock producers that are not part of the new federal and state regulatory programs. While these tools could help smaller producers protect water quality, it would divert the limited state agency and committee resources away from the work needed to help larger producers comply with the new federal requirements.

To fulfill the Legislature's intent regarding the membership of the committee and the reporting requirements for composting of dead animals:

1. I will ask legislative leadership to appoint representatives to serve as members of the Development and Oversight Committee. I will also review the membership of the Development and Oversight Committee to ensure effective representation of affected and interested parties, and, as needed, seek nominations from statewide organizations to identify the best candidates for the committee.

2. I hereby direct the Departments of Agriculture and Ecology, and the Department of Health, working with the State Board of Health, to provide reports on their programs related to safe disposal of animal carcasses, including disposal through composting, rendering, burying, and land filling methods. I further direct that the agencies provide their reports to the assigned committees of the Legislature at their legislative assembly in September 2005.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Section 2 of Substitute Senate Bill No. 5602.

With the exception of Section 2, Substitute Senate Bill No. 5602 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine O. Gregoire
Governor