

CHAPTER 178

[Substitute House Bill No. 2014]

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS COMMISSION MERCHANTS

AN ACT Relating to agricultural products commission merchants; amending RCW 20.01.010, 20.01.125, 20.01.130, 20.01.210, 20.01.220, 20.01.230, 20.01.240, 20.01.460, 20.01.610, and 62A.9-204; adding new sections to chapter 20.01 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 60.13 RCW; repealing RCW 20.01.035 and 20.01.290; and prescribing penalties.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. A new section is added to chapter 20.01 RCW to read as follows:

The director shall have the authority to issue a notice of civil infraction if an infraction is committed in his or her presence or, if after investigation, the director has reasonable cause to believe an infraction has been committed. It shall be a misdemeanor for any person to refuse to properly identify himself or herself for the purpose of issuance of a notice of infraction or to refuse to sign the written promise to appear or respond to a notice of infraction. Any person wilfully violating a written and signed promise to respond to a notice of infraction shall be guilty of a misdemeanor regardless of the disposition of the notice of infraction.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 20.01 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Any person who receives a notice of infraction shall respond to such notice as provided in this section within fifteen days of the date of the notice.

(2) Any employee or agent of a licensee under this chapter is fully authorized to accept a notice of infraction on behalf of the licensee. The director shall also furnish a copy of the notice of infraction to the licensee by certified mail within five days of issuance.

(3) If the person determined to have committed the infraction does not contest the determination, that person shall respond by completing the appropriate portion of the notice of infraction and submitting it, either by mail or in person, to the court specified on the notice. A check or money order in the amount of the penalty prescribed for the infraction must be submitted with the response. When a response, which does not contest the determination, is received, an appropriate order shall be entered into the courts record and a record of the response shall be furnished to the director.

(4) If a person determined to have committed the infraction wishes to contest the determination, that person shall respond by completing the portion of the notice of the infraction requesting a hearing and submitted either by mail or in person to the court specified in the notice. The court shall notify the person in writing of the time, place, and the date of the hearing

which shall not be sooner than fifteen days from the date of the notice, except by agreement.

(5) If the person determined to have committed the infraction does not contest the determination, but wishes to explain mitigating circumstances surrounding the infraction, the person shall respond by completing the portion of the notice of infraction requesting a hearing for that purpose and submitting it either by mail or in person to the court specified in the notice. The court shall notify the person in writing of the time, place and date of the hearing.

(6) If a person issued a notice of infraction fails to respond to the notice of infraction or fails to appear at the hearing requested pursuant to this section, the court shall enter an appropriate order in assessing the monetary penalty prescribed in the schedule of penalties submitted to the court by the director and shall notify the director of the failure to respond to the notice of infraction or to appear at a requested hearing.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 20.01 RCW to read as follows:

A hearing held for the purpose of contesting the determination that an infraction has been committed shall be held without jury. The court may consider the notice of infraction and any other written report submitted by the director. The person named in the notice may subpoena witnesses and has the right to present evidence and examine witnesses present in court. The burden of proof is upon the state to establish the commission of the infraction by preponderance of evidence.

After consideration of the evidence and argument, the court shall determine whether the infraction was committed. Where it is not established that the infraction was committed, an order dismissing the notice shall be entered in the court's record. When it is established that the infraction was committed, an appropriate order shall be entered in the court's record, a copy of which shall be furnished to the director. Appeal from the court's determination or order shall be to the superior court and must be appealed within ten days. The decision of the superior court is subject only to discretionary review pursuant to Rule 2.3 of the rules of appellate procedure.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 20.01 RCW to read as follows:

A hearing held for the purpose of allowing a person to explain mitigating circumstances surrounding the commission of an infraction shall be an informal proceeding. The person named in the notice may not subpoena witnesses. The determination that the infraction has been committed may not be contested at a hearing held for the purpose of explaining circumstances. After the court has heard the explanation of the circumstances surrounding the commission of the infraction, an appropriate order shall be entered in the court's record. A copy of the order shall be furnished to the director. There may be no appeal from the court's determination or order.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 20.01 RCW to read as follows:

Any person found to have committed a civil infraction under this chapter shall be assessed a monetary penalty. No monetary penalty so assessed may exceed one thousand dollars. The director shall adopt a schedule of monetary penalties for each violation of this chapter classified as a civil infraction and shall submit the schedule to the proper courts. Whenever a monetary penalty is imposed by the court, the penalty is immediately due and payable. The court may, at its discretion, grant an extension of time, not to exceed thirty days, in which the penalty must be paid. Failure to pay any monetary penalties imposed under this chapter shall be punishable as a misdemeanor.

Sec. 6. Section 1, chapter 139, Laws of 1959 as last amended by section 8, chapter 412, Laws of 1985 and RCW 20.01.010 are each amended to read as follows:

As used in this title the terms defined in this section have the meanings indicated unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Director" means the director of agriculture or his duly authorized representative.

(2) "Person" means any natural person, firm, partnership, exchange, association, trustee, receiver, corporation, and any member, officer, or employee thereof or assignee for the benefit of creditors.

(3) "Agricultural product" means any unprocessed horticultural, vermicultural and its byproducts, viticultural, berry, poultry, poultry product, grain, bee, or other agricultural products, and includes mint or mint oil processed by or for the producer thereof and hay and straw baled or prepared for market in any manner or form and livestock. When used in RCW 60.13.020, "agricultural product" means horticultural, viticultural, and berry products, hay and straw, and turf and forage seed and applies only when such products are delivered to a processor or conditioner in an unprocessed form.

(4) "Producer" means any person engaged in the business of growing or producing any agricultural product, whether as the owner of the products, or producing the products for others holding the title thereof.

(5) "Consignor" means any producer, person, or his agent who sells, ships, or delivers to any commission merchant, dealer, cash buyer, or agent, any agricultural product for processing, handling, sale, or resale.

(6) "Commission merchant" means any person who receives on consignment for sale or processing and sale from the consignor thereof any agricultural product for sale on commission on behalf of the consignor, or who accepts any farm product in trust from the consignor thereof for the purpose of resale, or who sells or offers for sale on commission any agricultural product, or who in any way handles for the account of or as an agent of the consignor thereof, any agricultural product.

(7) "Dealer" means any person other than a cash buyer, as defined in subsection (10) of this section, who solicits, contracts for, or obtains from the consignor thereof for reselling or processing, title, possession, or control of any agricultural product, or who buys or agrees to buy any agricultural product from the consignor thereof for sale or processing and includes any person, other than one who acts solely as a producer, who retains title in an agricultural product and delivers it to a producer for further production or increase. For the purposes of this chapter, the term dealer includes any person who purchases livestock on behalf of and for the account of another, or who purchases cattle in another state or country and imports these cattle into this state for resale.

(8) "Limited dealer" means any person operating under the alternative bonding provision in RCW 20.01.211.

(9) "Broker" means any person other than a commission merchant, dealer, or cash buyer who negotiates the purchase or sale of any agricultural product, but no broker may handle the agricultural products involved or proceeds of the sale.

(10) "Cash buyer" means any person other than a commission merchant, dealer, or broker, who obtains from the consignor thereof for the purpose of resale or processing, title, possession, or control of any agricultural product or who contracts for the title, possession, or control of any agricultural product, or who buys or agrees to buy any agricultural product by paying to the consignor at the time of obtaining possession or control of any agricultural product the full agreed price of the agricultural product, in coin or currency, lawful money of the United States. However, a cashier's check, certified check, or bankdraft may be used for the payment.

(11) "Agent" means any person who, on behalf of any commission merchant, dealer, broker, or cash buyer, acts as liaison between a consignor and a principal, or receives, contracts for, or solicits any agricultural product from the consignor thereof or who negotiates the consignment or purchase of any agricultural product on behalf of any commission merchant, dealer, broker, or cash buyer and who transacts all or a portion of that business at any location other than at the principal place of business of his employer. With the exception of an agent for a commission merchant or dealer handling horticultural products, an agent may operate only in the name of one principal and only to the account of that principal.

(12) "Retail merchant" means any person operating from a bona fide or established place of business selling agricultural products twelve months of each year. ~~((Any retailer may occasionally wholesale any agricultural product which he has in surplus; however, such wholesaling shall not be in excess of two percent of the retailer's gross business.))~~

(13) "Fixed or established place of business" for the purpose of this chapter means any permanent warehouse, building, or structure, at which

necessary and appropriate equipment and fixtures are maintained for properly handling those agricultural products generally dealt in, and at which supplies of the agricultural products being usually transported are stored, offered for sale, sold, delivered, and generally dealt in in quantities reasonably adequate for and usually carried for the requirements of such a business, and that is recognized as a permanent business at such place, and carried on as such in good faith, and not for the purpose of evading this chapter, and where specifically designated personnel are available to handle transactions concerning those agricultural products generally dealt in, which personnel are available during designated and appropriate hours to that business, and shall not mean a residence, barn, garage, tent, temporary stand or other temporary quarters, any railway car, or permanent quarters occupied pursuant to any temporary arrangement.

(14) "Processor" means any person, firm, company, or other organization that purchases agricultural crops from a consignor and that cans, freezes, dries, dehydrates, cooks, presses, powders, or otherwise processes those crops in any manner whatsoever for eventual resale.

(15) "Pooling contract" means any written agreement whereby a consignor delivers a horticultural product to a commission merchant under terms whereby the commission merchant may commingle the consignor's horticultural products for sale with others similarly agreeing, which must include all of the following:

(a) A delivery receipt for the consignor that indicates the variety of horticultural product delivered, the number of containers, or the weight and tare thereof;

(b) Horticultural products received for handling and sale in the fresh market shall be accounted for to the consignor with individual pack-out records that shall include variety, grade, size, and date of delivery. Individual daily packing summaries shall be available within forty-eight hours after packing occurs. However, platform inspection shall be acceptable by mutual contract agreement on small deliveries to determine variety, grade, size, and date of delivery;

(c) Terms under which the commission merchant may use his judgment in regard to the sale of the pooled horticultural product;

(d) The charges to be paid by the consignor as filed with the state of Washington;

(e) A provision that the consignor shall be paid for his pool contribution when the pool is in the process of being marketed in direct proportion, not less than eighty percent of his interest less expenses directly incurred, prior liens, and other advances on the grower's crop unless otherwise mutually agreed upon between grower and commission merchant.

(16) "Date of sale" means the date agricultural products are delivered to the person buying the products.

(17) "Boom loader" means a person who owns or operates, or both, a mechanical device mounted on a vehicle and used to load hay or straw for compensation.

(18) "Conditioner" means any person, firm, company, or other organization that receives turf, forage, or vegetable seeds from a consignor for drying or cleaning.

(19) "Seed bailment contract" means any contract meeting the requirements of chapter 15.48 RCW.

(20) "Proprietary seed" means any seed that is protected under the Federal Plant Variety Protection Act.

(21) "Licensed public weighmaster" means any person, licensed under the provisions of chapter 15.80 RCW, who weighs, measures, or counts any commodity or thing and issues therefor a signed certified statement, ticket, or memorandum of weight, measure, or count upon which the purchase or sale of any commodity or upon which the basic charge of payment for services rendered is based.

(22) "Certified weight" means any signed certified statement or memorandum of weight, measure or count issued by a licensed public weighmaster in accordance with the provisions of chapter 15.80 RCW.

Sec. 7. Section 8, chapter 232, Laws of 1963 as amended by section 6, chapter 182, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. and RCW 20.01.125 are each amended to read as follows:

Every dealer and commission merchant dealing in hay or straw shall obtain a certified vehicle tare weight and a certified vehicle gross weight for each load hauled and shall furnish the consignor with a copy of such certified weight ticket within seventy-two hours after taking delivery. It shall be a violation of this chapter for any licensee to transport hay or straw which has been purchased by weight without having obtained a certified weight ticket from the first licensed public weighmaster which would be encountered on the ordinary route to the destination where the hay or straw is to be unloaded.

Sec. 8. Section 13, chapter 139, Laws of 1959 as last amended by section 1, chapter 142, Laws of 1973 and RCW 20.01.130 are each amended to read as follows:

All fees and other moneys received by the department under the provisions of this chapter shall be paid to the director and shall be used solely for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this chapter and rules ((and regulations)) adopted hereunder. All civil fines received by the courts as the result of notices of infractions issued by the director shall be paid to the director, less any mandatory court costs and assessments.

Sec. 9. Section 5, chapter 232, Laws of 1963 as last amended by section 4, chapter 305, Laws of 1983 and RCW 20.01.210 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Before the license is issued to any commission merchant or dealer, or both, the applicant shall execute and deliver to the director a surety bond executed by the applicant as principal and by a surety company qualified and authorized to do business in this state as surety. Said bond shall be to the state for the benefit of qualified consignors of agricultural products in this state. All such sureties on a bond, as provided herein, shall be released and discharged from all liability to the state accruing on such bond by giving notice to the principal and the director by certified mail. Upon receipt of such notice the director shall notify the surety and the principal of the effective date of termination which shall be thirty days from the receipt of such notice by the director, but this shall not relieve, release, or discharge the surety from any liability already accrued or which shall accrue before the expiration period provided for above.

(2) The bond for a commission merchant or dealer in hay, straw or turf, forage or vegetable seed shall be not less than fifteen thousand dollars ((for a commission merchant, or a dealer in turf, forage, or vegetable seed, hay, or straw)). The actual amount of such bond shall be determined by dividing the annual dollar volume of the licensee's net proceeds or net payments due consignors by twelve and increasing that amount to the next multiple of five thousand dollars, except that the bond amount for dollar volume arising from proprietary seed bailment contracts shall be computed as provided in subsection (4) of this section. Such bond for a new commission merchant or dealer in hay, straw or turf, forage or vegetable seed shall be subject to increase at any time during the licensee's first year of operation based on the average of business volume for any three months. Except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, the bond shall be not less than three thousand dollars for any other dealer.

(3) The bond for a commission merchant or dealer in livestock shall be not less than ((seven thousand five hundred)) ten thousand dollars. ((★)) The actual amount of such bond shall be determined in accordance with the formula set forth in the packers and stockyard act of 1921 (7 U.S.C. 181), except that a commission merchant or dealer in livestock shall increase his bond by five thousand dollars for each agent he has endorsed under RCW 20.01.090.

(4) The bond for a commission merchant ((or dealer, other than a commission merchant or a dealer in turf, forage, or vegetable seed or a dealer in hay or straw;)) handling agricultural products other than livestock, hay, straw or turf, forage or vegetable seed shall not be less than seven thousand five hundred dollars. The bond for a dealer handling agricultural products other than livestock, hay, straw or turf, forage or vegetable seed shall not be less than three thousand dollars. The actual amount of such bond shall be determined by dividing the annual dollar volume of ((that commission merchant's or dealer's)) the licensee's net proceeds or net payments due consignors by fifty-two and increasing that amount to the next

multiple of two thousand dollars. However, bonds above twenty-six thousand dollars shall be increased to the next multiple of five thousand dollars.

~~(5) ((The bond for a commission merchant or dealer in turf, forage, or vegetable seed or a dealer in hay or straw shall be determined by dividing the annual dollar volume of that commission merchant's or dealer's net proceeds or net payments due consignors by twelve and increasing that amount to the next multiple of five thousand dollars, except that the determination of bond amounts for any portion of dollar volume directly related to proprietary seed bailment contracts shall be computed as provided in subsection (4) of this section. The bond for a new commission merchant or a dealer in turf, forage, or vegetable seed or dealer in hay or straw is subject to increase at any time during the licensee's first year of operation and shall be based on the monthly average of the volume of purchases of any three months of operation.~~

~~(6))~~ When the annual dollar volume of any commission merchant or dealer reaches two million six hundred thousand dollars, the amount of the bond required above this level shall be on a basis of ten percent of the amount arrived at by applying the appropriate formula.

Sec. 10. Section 22, chapter 139, Laws of 1959 as amended by section 4, chapter 194, Laws of 1982 and RCW 20.01.220 are each amended to read as follows:

Any consignor of an agricultural product claiming to be injured by the fraud of any commission merchant and/or dealer or their agents may bring action upon said bond against principal, surety, and agent in any court of competent jurisdiction to recover the damages caused by such fraud. Any consignor undertaking such an action shall name the director as a party.

Sec. 11. Section 23, chapter 139, Laws of 1959 and RCW 20.01.230 are each amended to read as follows:

The director or any consignor of an agricultural product may also bring action upon said bond against both principal and surety in any court of competent jurisdiction to recover the damages caused by any failure to comply with the provisions of this chapter or the rules ~~((and regulations))~~ adopted hereunder. Any consignor undertaking such an action shall name the director as a party.

Sec. 12. Section 24, chapter 139, Laws of 1959 and RCW 20.01.240 are each amended to read as follows:

~~((In case of failure of a commission merchant and/or dealer to pay a consignor for an agricultural product received from said consignor, the director shall proceed forthwith))~~ (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, any consignor who believes he or she has a valid claim against the bond of a commission merchant or dealer shall file a claim with the director. Upon the filing of a claim under this subsection against any commission merchant or dealer handling any agricultural product, the director

may, after investigation, proceed to ascertain the names and addresses of all consignor creditors of such commission merchant and ~~((/or))~~ dealer, together with the amounts due and owing to them by such commission merchant and ~~((/or))~~ dealer, and shall request all such consignor creditors to file a verified statement of their respective claims with the director. Such request shall be addressed to each known consignor creditor at his last known address.

(2) Any consignor who believes he or she has a valid claim against the bond of a commission merchant or dealer in hay or straw, shall file a claim with the director within twenty days of the licensee's default. In the case of a claim against the bond of a commission merchant or unlimited dealer in hay or straw, default occurs when the licensee fails to make payment within thirty days of the date the licensee took possession of the hay or straw. In the case of a claim against a limited dealer in hay or straw, default occurs when the licensee fails to make payment upon taking possession of the hay or straw. Upon verifying the consignor's claim either through investigation or, if necessary, an administrative action, the director shall, within ten working days of the filing of the claim, make demand for payment of the claim by the licensee's surety without regard to any other potentially valid claim. Any subsequent claim will likewise result in a demand against the licensee's surety, subject to the availability of any remaining bond proceeds.

Sec. 13. Section 46, chapter 139, Laws of 1959 as amended by section 4, chapter 20, Laws of 1982 and RCW 20.01.460 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) ~~((Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a))~~ Any person who violates the provisions of this chapter or fails to comply with the rules adopted under this chapter is guilty of a gross misdemeanor, except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section.

(2) Any commission merchant, dealer, or cash buyer, or any person assuming or attempting to act as a commission merchant, dealer, or cash buyer without a license is guilty of a class C felony who:

(a) Imposes false charges for handling or services in connection with agricultural products.

(b) Makes fictitious sales or is guilty of collusion to defraud the consignor.

(c) Intentionally makes false statement or statements as to the grade, conditions, markings, quality, or quantity of goods shipped or packed in any manner.

(d) ~~((Intentionally))~~ Fails to ~~((pay for agricultural products valued at more than two hundred fifty dollars within the time and in the manner required by this chapter, or attempts payment of an amount greater than two hundred fifty dollars by a check he or she knows not to be backed by sufficient funds to cover such check))~~ comply with the payment requirements set forth under RCW 20.01.010(10), 20.01.390 or 20.01.430.

(3) Any person who violates the provisions of RCW 20.01.040, 20.01.120, 20.01.125, 20.01.410 or 20.01.610 has committed a civil infraction.

Sec. 14. Section 8, chapter 305, Laws of 1983 and RCW 20.01.610 are each amended to read as follows:

The director or his appointed officers may stop a vehicle transporting hay or straw upon the public roads of this state if there is reasonable cause to believe the carrier, seller, or buyer may be in violation of this chapter. Any operator of a vehicle failing or refusing to stop when directed to do so ((is guilty of a misdemeanor)) has committed a civil infraction.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 15. A new section is added to chapter 60.13 RCW to read as follows:

A person who controls or possesses amounts payable to the preparer of dairy products or the preparer's assigns, if the preparer or preparer's assigns is not a producer-handler, which are properly encumbered by a preparer's lien upon an account receivable shall not be obligated to pay a producer amounts to which the producer's preparer lien has attached until that person receives written notice of such lien, nor shall that person be liable to the producer for any amounts paid out prior to receipt of said notice. The notice required herein shall contain the information described in RCW 60.13.040(2). If requested by the person responsible for payment of such amounts, the producer must seasonably furnish reasonable proof that the preparer lien continues to exist and unless such proof is so furnished, that person has no obligation to pay the producer. A preparer of dairy products shall provide the name of the purchaser or marketing agent of the products to the producer upon request.

Failure to furnish the written notice as provided in this section shall not affect the status of the lien established under this chapter in regard to the relationship with other creditors.

Sec. 16. Section 9-204, chapter 157, Laws of 1965 ex. sess. as last amended by section 13, chapter 41, Laws of 1981 and RCW 62A.9-204 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2), a security agreement may provide that any or all obligations covered by the security agreement are to be secured by after-acquired collateral.

(2) No security interest attaches under an after-acquired property clause to consumer goods other than accessions (RCW 62A.9-314) when given as additional security unless the debtor acquires rights in them within ten days after the secured party gives value.

(3) Obligations covered by a security agreement may include future advances or other value whether or not the advances or value are given pursuant to commitment (subsection (1) of RCW 62A.9-105).

(4) A security interest cannot attach to livestock or to meat or meat products made from such livestock, where: (a) The livestock was sold to the

commission merchant or dealer in livestock as defined in chapter 20.01 RCW or to a commercial feedlot by another party, (b) this other party has been paid by draft or check, and (c) the draft or check remains outstanding; PROVIDED, That a security interest may attach when the draft or check has been outstanding more than ten days.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 17. The following acts or parts of acts are each repealed:

- (1) Section 1, chapter 69, Laws of 1965 and RCW 20.01.035; and
- (2) Section 29, chapter 139, Laws of 1959, section 6, chapter 305, Laws of 1983 and RCW 20.01.290.

Passed the House March 9, 1986.

Passed the Senate March 7, 1986.

Approved by the Governor April 1, 1986.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State April 1, 1986.

CHAPTER 179

[Substitute Senate Bill No. 3948]

TRANSPORTATION LIENS

AN ACT Relating to transportation liens; amending RCW 60.24.075; and adding a new section to chapter 60.04 RCW.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. A new section is added to chapter 60.04 RCW to read as follows:

The lot tract, parcel of land, or any other type of real property or real property improvements upon which the type of activities listed in RCW 60.24.020, 60.24.030, or 60.24.035 are to be performed, or so much property thereof as may be necessary to satisfy the lien and the judgment thereon, to be determined by the court on rendering judgment in a foreclosure of lien, shall also be subject to the lien to the extent of its interest of the persons who in their own behalf, or through any of their agents, caused any of the types of activities listed in RCW 60.24.020, 60.24.030, or 60.24.035.

Sec. 2. Section 7, chapter 132, Laws of 1893 and RCW 60.24.075 are each amended to read as follows:

Every person, within ((thirty)) sixty days after the close of the rendition of the services, or after the close of the work or labor mentioned in the preceding sections, claiming the benefit hereof, must file for record with the county auditor of the county in which such saw logs, spars, piles, and other timber were cut, or in which such lumber or shingles were manufactured, a claim containing a statement of his demand and the amount thereof, after deducting as nearly as possible all just credits and offsets, with the name of the person by whom he was employed, with a statement of the terms and conditions of his contract, if any, and in case there is no express contract,