

**Cattle
Producers
of
Washington**



February 12, 2016

Dear Washington State Senators:

A bill coming before you, Senate Bill 6638, would increase the Washington State Beef Checkoff fee to \$2.50 per head of cattle sold in the state. Cattle Producers of Washington is **OPPOSED** to this bill for the following reasons:

*The majority of family ranchers in Washington State **DO NOT** support an increase in the Washington Beef Checkoff. Any increased proposal should be put to a vote of cattle producers. The Washington Beef Commission does not want the increase to go out to a vote in WA because they know it will fail.

*A \$1 increase to the Washington Beef Checkoff would double the budget of the Washington Beef Commission without any concrete benefits to producers. This would assess a \$2.50 per head fee on all cattle sold in Washington State, an increase from the current \$1.50.

*The current marketing strategy of the Washington Beef Commission **HAS NOT** benefited Washington ranch families, because the current promotions focus on “beef” in general and do not emphasize beef products raised in Washington. This strategy has improved profits for the huge slaughter plants that support the increase.

*The increased proposal is asking more from ranch families as their overall profit margin is decreasing. In 1980, 60 cents of the consumer dollar went to producers. In 2009, for example, only 43 cents of that dollar went to the producer while fees and inputs continued to rise. This is evidence the Washington Beef Commission’s strategy is not benefiting ranch families.

*The average age of the US rancher is 57 years old. If ranchers continue to be burdened with increased fees, taxes and regulations, we will ensure that ranching leaves Washington State because the next generation will not be able to absorb the financial overhead. Economically, that will be disastrous for Washington. Recent studies show for every \$1 million in cattle sales, there is an increase of 43 associated jobs.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. We ask you to vote **NO** on Senate Bill 6638.

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