

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT
1st Session of the 51st Legislature

Bill No.: HB 1669
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Author: Representative Dorman
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Analyst: Mark Newman

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Reviewed: Mark Tygret

Summary

HB 1669, as introduced, is new language designating and adopting the watermelon as the official vegetable of the State of Oklahoma.

Analysis

HB 1669, as introduced, will designate and adopt the watermelon, *Citrullus lanatus*, as the official vegetable of the State of Oklahoma. Whereas many residents of this state may view the watermelon as a fruit, scholars inform us the watermelon may in fact be considered both a fruit and a vegetable as a result of its membership in the botanical family Curcubitaceae, with other family members such as the cucumber, pumpkin and squash. This fact alone establishes the watermelon as a truly versatile and multi-talented member of the Plantae kingdom worthy of this designation. Although the designation authorized in this legislation will have no impact on appropriations or appropriated funds, the status of the watermelon as a valuable cash crop, healthy and nutritional food, and important component of Oklahoma's recreation and tourism industry cannot be denied nor dismissed.

According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service of the United States Department of Agriculture in their January 2006 report, Oklahoma ranked 11th in the nation producing more than 77,000,000 pounds of watermelon and generating more than \$5,250,000 in revenue.

When considering the health and nutritional aspects of the watermelon, doctors and research scientists agree that the watermelon is the "Lycopene Leader" and a valuable component of any healthy diet. A 2-cup serving of watermelon contains no fat or cholesterol and is an excellent source of Vitamins A, B6, and C. This same 2-cup serving can provide 30% of the daily requirements for Vitamin A, 25% for Vitamin C, and important levels of calcium, iron, and dietary fiber. The Vitamin B6 found in watermelons is used by the human body to manufacture brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, melatonin and dopamine, which preliminary research shows may help the body cope with anxiety and panic.

In the arena of recreation and tourism the watermelon reigns supreme. How can anyone imagine a picnic at one of Oklahoma's beautiful parks or lakes without a delicious and healthy watermelon? The fun generated by sharing a cold watermelon with friends and family cannot be measured and the sport of spitting watermelon seeds provides a wholesome and clean physical activity for the young and mature alike.

Long Term Considerations

