

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sSB-1497

AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAMMING AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

As Amended by Senate "A" (LCO 10072)

House Calendar No.: 683

Senate Calendar No.: 360

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Revenue Loss	None	2.5 million
Department of Revenue Services	GF - Cost	None	75,000
Department of Agriculture	GF - 318357	318,357	318,357
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - 125532	125,532	125,532

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: See Below

Explanation

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Section 1 makes a clarifying change regarding the State Veterinarian and has no fiscal impact.

Sections 2 and 3 result in a minimal revenue gain to the resources of the General Fund, beginning in FY 26, associated with a fee for soil amendment registrations. The bill sets the fee at an amount to be determined by the DoAg commissioner, up to \$75. It is estimated that there would be less than 300 soil registrations annually, resulting in a

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26.

minimal revenue gain.

Section 4 results in a minimal cost to municipalities. The bill allows the DoAg commissioner to charge municipalities the actual cost to obtain and distribute dog tags, rather than five cents per tag (current law). It is estimated that the actual cost for this service is seven cents per tag, a two-cent increase. The increased cost to municipalities is anticipated to be minimal.

Section 5 establishes a refundable farm investment tax credit, results in a (1) General Fund revenue loss of approximately \$2.5 million annually beginning in FY 27 and (2) one-time General Fund cost to the Department of Revenue Services of up to \$75,000 in FY 27 associated with programming updates to the CTax tax administration system and myconneCT online portal, and form modification.

Section 6 may result in a grand list reduction of up to \$144 million to municipalities cumulatively beginning in FY 27 as a result of increasing the mandatory farm machinery property tax exemption from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

Section 7 makes clarifying and procedural changes and has no fiscal impact.

Section 8 requires the State Building Code to include provisions that allow certain residential buildings to include an elevator and exempts “hoop houses” and “high tunnels” from certain standards relating to hurricane proofing, results in no fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

Section 9 establishes the Farmers' Crop Loss Reimbursement Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture (DoAg). This is anticipated to result in an additional cost as DoAg does not currently have the staff to establish and administer the new grant program and would require two new full-time positions, including: one Grant and Contract Specialist (annual salary of \$103,227) and one Analyst 2 (annual salary of \$101,903). The additional full-time positions would

result in a total cost of \$205,130 (corresponding fringe benefits of \$83,508) and approximately \$10,000 in other expenses.

Section 10 has no fiscal impact by granting immunity from civil liability to certain agritourism businesses. The court system disposes of over 250,000 cases annually and the number of cases potentially impacted is not anticipated to be great enough to result in savings.

Sections 11-17 shorten the commercial shellfish harvest season. The amendment moves up the start date of issuing fines from July 20 to June 30 in certain instances, and up to June 15 in others. To the extent this results in additional violations, there could be an associated revenue gain to the resources of the General Fund. The penalties for violating shellfishing restrictions are subject to a fine of up to \$250. Any additional violations and corresponding revenue anticipated from shortening the harvest season is anticipated to be minimal. The amendment makes other clarifying and procedural changes to shellfishing laws that are not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact.

Section 18 establishes a Manure Management Grant Program within DoAg. This is anticipated to result in an additional annual cost of approximately \$145,251 as DoAg does not currently have the staff to establish and administer the new grant program and would require one new full-time Grant and Contract Specialist with an annual salary of \$103,227 and corresponding fringe benefits of \$42,024.

Section 19 requires the General Assembly to conduct an informational hearing and has no fiscal impact.

Section 20 conforms statute to practice and has no fiscal impact.

Sections 21-22 result in a potential cost to DoAg associated with enforcing restrictions on fertilizer sold in the state.

Senate "A" strikes the underlying bill and its associated fiscal impact and replaces it with the fiscal impact described above.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation, the number of soil amendment registrations, and the actual cost to obtain and distribute dog tags, violations, and refundable tax credits.

The preceding Fiscal Impact statement is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for the purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.