



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 175

January Session, 2011

House Bill No. 5472

House of Representatives, March 23, 2011

The Committee on Planning and Development reported through REP. GENTILE of the 104th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT AUTHORIZING LOCAL AND REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL COUNCILS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2011*) (a) Any municipality
2 may, by vote of its legislative body or, in a municipality where the
3 legislative body is a town meeting, by vote of the board of selectmen,
4 establish a local agricultural council to: (1) Provide information to local
5 farmers and to municipal boards and commissions about the benefits
6 of a balance between agriculture and other land uses; (2) educate
7 municipal officials about agricultural laws and safety issues; (3)
8 identify grant sources for farmers and municipalities; (4) enable a
9 common understanding of agriculture among all municipal
10 departments; (5) provide information and guidance about zoning
11 issues relating to agriculture; (6) support local, regional and state
12 vocational agricultural programs concerning agricultural matters; (7)
13 provide conflict resolution and advisory services; (8) identify
14 innovative opportunities for agriculture; and (9) create a climate that

15 supports the economic viability of agriculture in the municipality.

16 (b) Any two or more municipalities may form a regional
17 agricultural council for the purposes set forth in subsection (a) of this
18 section by vote of the legislative body or, in a municipality where the
19 legislative body is a town meeting, by vote of the board of selectmen,
20 of each municipality.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2011</i>	New section

PD *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do 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.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 12 \$	FY 13 \$
Various Municipalities	See Below	See Below	See Below

Explanation

It is anticipated that any municipality that elects to establish a local agricultural council will do so to the extent that local resources allow.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 5472*****AN ACT AUTHORIZING LOCAL AND REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL COUNCILS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill explicitly authorizes a municipality to establish a local or regional agricultural council. (Some municipalities currently have similar entities.) Under the bill, the legislative body of the town, or the board of selectmen where the town meeting is the legislative body, must vote to establish a council. Two or more towns can agree to form a regional council by a vote of their legislative bodies.

Under the bill, an agriculture council's purposes are to:

1. provide information to local farmers and municipal boards and commissions about the benefits of balancing agriculture and other land uses;
2. educate municipal officials about agricultural laws and safety issues;
3. identify grant sources for farmers and municipalities;
4. enable a common understanding of agriculture among all municipal departments;
5. provide information and guidance about agriculture-related zoning issues;
6. support local, regional, and state vocational agricultural programs;
7. provide conflict resolution and advisory services;

- 8. identify innovative opportunities for agriculture; and
- 9. create a climate that supports agriculture's economic viability in the municipality.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2011

BACKGROUND

Related Law

The law authorizes the agriculture commissioner to provide advisory opinions to a municipality, state agency, tax assessor, or landowner at their request on (1) what, by law, constitutes agriculture or farming and (2) the classification of land as farmland or open space (CGS § 22-4c).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/11/2011)