

# OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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<http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa>

sHB-6385

## AN ACT CONCERNING ENHANCEMENTS TO CERTAIN AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS.

### ***OFA Fiscal Note***

#### ***State Impact:***

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Department of Agriculture	GF - Cost	125,832	125,832
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Revenue Gain	Potential Minimal	Potential Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

***Municipal Impact:*** None

#### ***Explanation***

This bill makes changes to various agricultural laws and programs.

**Section 3** alters labeling verbiage on farm products marketed under the “CT-Grown” program by the Department of Agriculture (DoAg). Violations of the new labeling requirements under the bill receive a warning for the first violation and a \$100 fine for subsequent violations. This may result in a minimal revenue gain to the General Fund, to the extent violations occur and are enforced by DoAg.

**Section 4** revises the penalties for violating the state’s produce safety laws and applies them to violations of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act’s (FSMA) produce safety rule. Currently, the FSMA law sets a range of fines as penalties (from \$25 to \$50 for a first offense and from \$100 to \$200 for subsequent offenses). Instead, the bill sets fines: \$50 for the first offense and \$200 for a subsequent offense. This is not anticipated to have a fiscal impact, as total revenue associated with these fines is minimal.

**Section 5** of the bill reduces the penalty for violating Connecticut's seed law (labeling, sales, and record keeping requirements). Currently, the penalty is a class D misdemeanor with a fine of \$100 for a first offense and \$200 for a subsequent offense. The bill removes the class D misdemeanor penalty, leaving the specified monetary fines in place. This has no fiscal impact as there have been no violations under the current statute for the past five years.

**Section 6** requires the farmers' market WIC and senior nutrition program vouchers, also administered by DoAg, to have a value of at least \$20. Currently, eligible program participants receive \$15 and \$18 in vouchers, respectively. Increasing the dollar amount of the WIC and senior nutrition vouchers to \$21 would result in annual costs to DoAg of \$125,832.<sup>1</sup>

**Section 10** expands the purposes of DoAg's farm viability matching grant program to include "the development of urban and nontraditional farming practices." This has no fiscal impact to the General Fund, but it may cause reserves within the nonlapsing account of the Community Investment Act to be expended faster than they otherwise would have been. The current balance in this account is \$717,592, and in FY 20 the account expended was \$549,937.

**Sections 11 - 13** eliminate the Connecticut Marketing Authority within DoAg. This has no fiscal impact as the Hartford Regional Market was transferred to the Capital Region Development Authority in January 2019 (FY 20) under PA 18-154.

Other sections and provisions of the bill make various changes that have no fiscal impact.

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<sup>1</sup> This estimate assumes the dollar amount of the vouchers is increased to \$21 to be consistent with the program's current practice of using vouchers in multiples of \$3.