

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-194

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN FARMING PROGRAMS OF THE

Title: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Vote Date: 3/8/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/28/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

As a streamlined agricultural department is necessary for a successful state impact, it is often necessary to remove redundant language and remove consultation with unnecessarily involved individuals. This bill seeks to streamline the Department of Agriculture by refining the general statutes and implementing minor additions to allow for faster decision making and adding clarity to terms previously used.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Bryan Hurlburt, Commissioner of Agriculture, Connecticut Department of Agriculture

This bill contains several technical revisions and concepts that are aimed to streamline the Department of Agriculture's current programming and responsibilities. The Department provides the following summary of the bill:

Sections 1 and 2 adjusts DoAg's development right programs, the Farmland Preservation Program and Community Farm Preservation Program by removing the Commissioner of DEEP as a consulting authority in the event a landowner seeks to repurchase their development rights from the State.

Section 3 is a technical change to address duplicative language in the CT-Grown statutes.

Section 4 will establish a defined harvest season, which would allow transporters to take advantage of the agricultural exemption to the hours of service and electronic logging device

restrictions for the transportation of agricultural commodities within a 150 air-mile radius of the source of said ag commodities.

Section 5 repeals repetitive language regarding CT Grown and the Seafood Council. It also eliminates resource assessment permits with the belief that they are burdensome and unnecessary.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Joan Nichols, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The Bureau supports establishing a year-round harvest season for the transportation of agricultural products. Similar legislation has been passed in other states, including New York and Massachusetts, and is supported in federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Regulations.

Susan Pronovost, Executive Director, Connecticut Greenhouse Growers Association

The Association supports section 4, which sets the annual harvest season as year-round. This new section is important to the Connecticut Greenhouse Industry because having the harvest season codified in the Connecticut General Statutes enables the agricultural producers to claim an exemption of hours of service and electronic logging devices for drivers and their trucks who are within 150 miles of their home base or farm. This will enable Connecticut farmers to get their personnel and equipment back to the farm without worry of going over hours when otherwise that personnel and equipment may have to pull off the road to comply with mandated electronic logging time. The executive director notes that Connecticut is one of four states in the nation that does not currently have a harvest time in their statutes.

Mary La Sala

The testifier expresses support for the bill.

Maizie Ogren

The testifier expresses support for the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Keegan Jalbert

The testifier expresses opposition for the bill.

Reported by: Judy Ganswindt

Date: 3/19/2024