

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry to which was
3 referred House Bill No. 813 entitled “An act relating to establishing the Tree
4 Fruit Farmer Assistance Program” respectfully reports that it has considered
5 the same and recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the
6 enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. TREE FRUIT FARMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

8 (a) The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall establish the Tree
9 Fruit Farmer Assistance Program consistent with the requirements of this
10 section.

11 (b) A farm in the State that grows tree fruit is eligible for assistance under
12 this section if:

13 (1) the farm is currently operating and producing tree fruit;

14 (2) the farm suffered production losses in calendar year 2023 due to
15 freezing or frost conditions;

16 (3) the farm is in good standing with the Agency of Agriculture, Food
17 and Markets; and

18 (4) the farm submits an application for assistance to the Agency of
19 Agriculture, Food and Markets by a date specified by the Secretary of
20 Agriculture, Food and Markets.

1 (c)(1) The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall provide
2 financial assistance to farms producing tree fruit in the State in the form of an
3 award to provide relief for losses in calendar year 2023 due to freezing or frost
4 conditions.

5 (2) The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall develop a
6 formula for calculation of an award under this section. The formula shall
7 incorporate:

8 (A) the average value per pound of each eligible tree fruit as a raw
9 agricultural commodity;

10 (B) the total production losses of a farm in calendar year 2023;

11 (C) a maximum award amount of ?% of a farm's production losses;

12 and

13 (D) a reduction in the maximum amount of the award per farm so
14 that the award does not exceed the total of uncovered losses at the farm.

15 (d) The Agency shall process applications for a grant in the order
16 applications are received. If all funds appropriated for implementation of this
17 section are awarded by the Agency, no further grants shall be made. If any
18 funds appropriated for implementation of this section remain after all timely
19 applications are processed, the remaining funds shall be transferred to the
20 Working Lands Enterprise Fund not later than December 31, 2024 for award

1 by the Working Lands Enterprise Board under the Small Farmer
2 Diversification and Transition Program.

3 Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION; TREE FRUIT FARMER ASSISTANCE
4 PROGRAM

5 In addition to other funds appropriated in fiscal year 2025, \$10,000,000.00
6 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and
7 Markets to implement the Tree Fruit Farmer Assistance Program established
8 pursuant to Sec. 1 of this act.

9 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

10 This act shall take effect on passage.

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17 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE