



STATE OF VERMONT

MEMORANDUM

To: Committee on Ways and Means
From: Committee on Agriculture and Forest Products
Date: February 5, 2016
Subject: Agriculture Fees in the Executive Branch Fee Bill

The Committee on Agriculture and Forest Products has, at the request of the Committee on Ways and Means, reviewed the fees that the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets proposed in the Executive Branch Fee Bill. The Committee on Agriculture and Forest Products recommends the following amendments to the proposed agriculture fees:

1. Initiation Fees

Amend or eliminate the “initiation fee” authorized under Sec. 1 of the draft bill, provided that the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets clearly is authorized to assess and collect late fees for failure to renew or obtain a required license or permits. The Agency requested authority to address those actors who purposefully delay renewal or application for a license or permit.

2. Small Farm Certification Fee

Strike the proposed small farm certification fee in Sec. 22 of the draft bill. In lieu of the proposed fee, the Committee on Agriculture and Forest Products recommends that the Agency of Agriculture report back to the General Assembly with a proposed small farm fee once the Agency has determined which small farms will require certification. The Committee on Agriculture and Forest Products recommends the following report language.

Sec. X. SMALL FARM CERTIFICATION FEE; REPORT

On or before November 15, 2016, the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall submit to the House Committee on Ways and Means, the Senate Committee on Finance, the House Committee on Agriculture and Forest Products, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture a proposed fee for small farms required to certify compliance with water quality requirements under the required agriculture practices. The recommended small farm certification fee shall be included in the Executive Branch Fee Report submitted to the General Assembly in 2017 under 32 V.S.A. § 605.

3. Point-of-Sale Scanning Point Fee

In Sec. 24, reduce the annual license fee for individual point-of-sale scanning points from \$25.00 to \$15.00, provided that the fee exemption for three or fewer scanning points is repealed. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets has testified to the need for the increased fee or removal of the exemption in order to assist the Agency in paying for the costs of licensing and inspecting scanning points.