

Comparison of Regenerative Agriculture Bills

| H.430 An Act Relating to Establishing a Regenerative Agriculture Program | H.661 An Act Relating to Regenerative Organic Farming |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires Secretary of Agriculture to establish a “Vermont Regenerative Agriculture Program” within the AAFM. • The program would certify land in the State as regenerative and would encourage regenerative agricultural practices. • Does not define what constitutes regenerative agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides standards for certification—see below. • Certification would include a seal issued by the State. • Requires AAFM to hire a Director of Regenerative Agriculture (Director) to administer the program and promote regenerative agricultural practices. • Establishes the standards for certificate under the Vermont Regenerative Agriculture Program. • An application for certification must show one of the following over a three year period in each successive year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topsoil on the land is increasing; ○ Farming methods are sequestering carbon; or ○ Soil contains increasing percentages of organic material. • Requires the Director to conduct annual tests on land of applicants for certification, including soil carbon tests, nitrogen tests, waster infiltration, and pesticide presence. • Certification is for a three year term. • Upon certification, the applicant shall be authorized to use regenerative agriculture seal in marketing. • Applicants pay a fee of \$500 for each three year period. • Fees are deposited in a special fund to be used to pay for the costs of the program,. • The Secretary would be required to recommend to the Legislature in 2022 whether to continue the program. • The Secretary would be required to form a Working Group on Regenerative Agriculture to evaluate future economic viability of farming in Vermont. The group would report to the Legislature. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates within VHCB a Regenerative Organic Transition Program (ROTAP). • ROTAP would provide technical and financial assistance to Vermont farmers seeking to transition from conventional farming to regenerative organic farming. • Defines “regenerative organic farming” as a farm that meets the standards set forth in the NSF Framework for Regenerative Organic Certification. • ROTAP shall provide the following services to farmers seeking to transition to regenerative organic farming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ information and education regarding the requirements for certification; ○ technical assistance in planning for certification; ○ technical assistance in completing a required application for certification; ○ financial assistance in paying for certification, including one or both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the amount of fees required for an organization to certify a farm as regenerative organic farming; ➤ grants of up to \$5,000 to retrofit equipment or implement practices required for certification. ○ technical assistance to maintain certification as regenerative organic farming once a farm is certified. • VHCB may enter into a contract with an organization with experience, such as NOFA, to implement ROTAP. • The contract would be for no more than three years. • The contracted entity would be required to encourage public and private contributions to ROTAP. • A ROTAP special fund would be created to be administered by VHCB. The fund would include private and public donations and legislative appropriations. • \$50,000 would be appropriated to the ROTAP special fund in fiscal year 2019 from the monies generated by the property transfer tax surcharge. |

