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H.275

Introduced by Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

Date:

Subject: Agriculture; Sustainable Jobs Fund; farm-to-plate

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to update the authority and purpose of the Farm-to-Plate Investment Program.

An act relating to the Farm-to-Plate Investment Program

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 330 is amended to read:

§ 330. THE FARM-TO-PLATE INVESTMENT PROGRAM; CREATION;  
~~GOALS~~ OUTCOMES; TASKS; METHODS

(a) Creation.

(1) The Sustainable Jobs Fund Program ~~in consultation with the Vermont Sustainable Agriculture Council~~ shall establish the Vermont Farm-to-Plate Investment Program to fulfill the goals and carry out the tasks described in this section.

(2) If at least \$100,000.00 in funding is not made available for the purpose of this section, the Sustainable Jobs Fund Program is encouraged but no longer required to fulfill the provisions of this section.

1           (b) ~~Goals~~ Intended outcomes. The ~~goals~~ intended outcomes of the Farm-  
2 to-Plate Investment Program are to:

3           (1) Increase economic development and create jobs in Vermont's food  
4 and farm sector.

5           (2) ~~Create jobs in the food and farm economy~~ Improve healthy soils,  
6 clean water, and resiliency of the working landscape in the face of climate  
7 change.

8           (3) Improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters.

9           (c) Tasks.

10           (1) ~~By June 30, 2010, the~~ The Vermont Farm-to-Plate Investment  
11 Program shall create a strategic plan for ~~agricultural economic~~ food system  
12 development, which may be periodically reviewed and updated, based upon  
13 the following:

14           (A) Inventory Vermont's food system infrastructure by gathering  
15 existing data, studies, and analysis about the components of Vermont's food  
16 system, including:

17           (i) The types of foods produced in Vermont, the number of  
18 producers of each type of food, the amount of each type of food produced, and  
19 the financial viability of each food-producing sector.

1           (ii) The types of food processors in Vermont, how much food  
2 produced in Vermont is purchased by Vermont processors, and the financial  
3 viability of the food processing sector in Vermont.

4           (iii) The current and potential markets in which Vermont food  
5 producers and processors can sell their products.

6           (iv) The extent of existing agricultural lands that could be  
7 expanded and the resources available to expand Vermont's food production.

8           (v) The potential for new farmers and food processors to enter the  
9 local food economy, the methods for new farmers to acquire land and other  
10 farm infrastructure, and the availability and barriers to farm and processing  
11 labor.

12           (vi) The potential for entirely new local products and the barriers  
13 to farmers and processors entering new markets.

14           (B) Identify gaps in the infrastructure and distribution systems and  
15 identify ways to address these gaps.

16           (2) The Vermont Farm-to-Plate Investment Program shall ~~seek grant~~  
17 ~~funding to support farm-to-table direct marketing, including farmers' markets~~  
18 ~~and community-supported agriculture operations and to support regional~~  
19 ~~community food hubs~~ provide support for farm and food businesses, including  
20 regional food hubs, selling in all types of markets, direct and wholesale, in the  
21 State and outside of the State.

1           (3) As an ongoing task, the Farm-to-Plate Investment Program shall use  
2           the information gathered for the strategic plan and updates to the plan to  
3           identify methods and the funding necessary to strengthen the links among  
4           producers, processors, and markets, including:

5                   (A) Support of the work of existing farm-to-school programs to  
6           increase the purchase of local foods by Vermont schools, with a particular  
7           emphasis on procurement of nutrient-dense animal foods.

8                   (B) Support the work of the Working Lands Enterprise Board to  
9           strategically invest in farm and food businesses;

10                  (C) Collaborating with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets  
11           and the Department of Buildings and General Services to increase procurement  
12           of local foods in accordance with 6 V.S.A. § 4601.

13                  ~~(C)~~(D) Collaborating with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and  
14           Markets ~~and the Sustainable Agriculture Council~~ to increase procurement of  
15           local foods by businesses and institutions.

16                  ~~(D)~~(E) Supporting initiatives that improve ~~direct~~ the marketing of  
17           foods from ~~the farm~~ Vermont producers to ~~the consumer~~ consumers inside the  
18           State and outside of the State.

19                  (F) Supporting education and workforce development initiatives that  
20           address skill and labor needs of farm and food businesses.

1           ~~(E)~~(G) Informing agricultural lenders of the information collected  
2           under subdivision (1) of this subsection (c) in order to facilitate availability of  
3           ~~agricultural farm and food sector~~ financing.

4           (4) The Farm-to-Plate Investment Program strategic plan shall also  
5           ~~include recommendations regarding~~ establish measurable goals that shall be  
6           tracked over the ~~ten-year~~ life of the Plan; methods for the ongoing collection of  
7           data necessary to track those goals; plans for updating the Plan as needed; and  
8           appropriate methods to track the ongoing economic contribution of the farm  
9           and food sector to the Vermont economy.

10          (d) Methods. To accomplish the goals and carry out the ongoing tasks  
11          stated in this section, the Vermont Farm-to-Plate Investment Program may:

12           (1) Create an advisory panel with representatives from the agricultural  
13           and business communities.

14           (2) Hire or assign staff.

15           (3) Seek and accept funds from private and public entities.

16           (4) Serve as the administrative support for the Farm-to-Plate Network.

17           ~~(5)~~ Utilize technical assistance, loans, grants, or other means ~~approved~~  
18           ~~by the Board.~~

19           (e) [Repealed.]

20          Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

21           This act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.