

1 Introduced by Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

2 Date:

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

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

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

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

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

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

11 (a) Creation.

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

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

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

1           (1) Increase economic development and create jobs in Vermont’s food  
2 and farm sector.

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

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

7           (c) Tasks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19                   (3) As an ongoing task, the Farm-to-Plate Investment Program shall use  
20 the information gathered for the strategic plan and updates to the plan to

1 identify methods and the funding necessary to strengthen the links among  
2 producers, processors, and markets, including:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11           (2) Hire or assign staff.

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

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

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

16           (e) [Repealed.]

17       Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

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