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Act No. 49 (H.434). Agriculture; pesticides; Agricultural Innovation Board

An act relating to establishing the Agricultural Innovation Board

This act establishes the Agricultural Innovation Board (Board) at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. The Board assumes the authority of the Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council (VPAC), which is repealed. The Board also shall review historic recommendations for pesticide reduction and coordinate work by existing work groups to avoid conflicting policy regarding regulation of pesticides and farming. The Board shall recommend practices that reduce the use of and exposure to pesticides and synthetic fertilizers in order to protect soil biology, human health, and environmental health, including recommended targets to achieve the State goal of overall pesticide reduction.

The Board shall recommend practices to reduce the use and generation of waste associated with plastic in farming. The Board also shall explore methods or standards for transitioning farmers to practices that reduce pesticide usage and methods or standards for farmers to engage in carbon sequestration or mitigation. The act repeals the Seed Review Panel and transfers to the Board the authority to review the seed traits of new genetically engineered seed proposed for sale in the State.

The Agricultural Innovation Board shall be made up of 13 members who have expertise on agricultural issues. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall appoint all non ex officio Board members. The Board shall meet no fewer than four times a year. The Agricultural Innovation Board shall issue an annual report to the General Assembly recommending policy solutions to assist farmers in reducing the use of and exposure to pesticides and in using innovative or alternative practices.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on July 1, 2021