

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Agriculture to which was referred House Bill No. 434
3 entitled “An act relating to establishing the Agricultural Innovation Board”
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the
5 Senate propose to the House that the bill be amended by striking out all after
6 the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 6 V.S.A. chapter 215, subchapter 7A is amended to read:

8 Subchapter 7A. ~~Regenerative Farming~~ Regenerative and Innovative
9 Agriculture

10 * * *

11 § 4964. AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION BOARD

12 (a) Creation. There is created the Agricultural Innovation Board that shall:

13 (1) Review historic recommendations for pesticide reduction in the State
14 and coordinate with existing work groups to avoid submitting to the General
15 Assembly conflicting policy recommendations on the regulation of pesticides
16 and farming.

17 (2) Recommend practices that reduce the use of and exposure to
18 pesticides and synthetic fertilizers in order to protect soil biology, human
19 health, and environmental health, including recommended targets to achieve
20 the State goal of an overall reduction in the use of pesticides consistent with
21 sound pest or vegetative management practices.

1 (3) Advise the Executive Branch and the General Assembly with respect
2 to legislation concerning the use of agricultural pest control measures and
3 integrated pest management.

4 (4) Recommend to the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets
5 policies, proposed rules, or legislation for the regulation of the use of treated
6 articles when the Board determines that use of a treated article will have a
7 hazardous or long-term deleterious effect on the environment in Vermont,
8 presents a likely risk to human health, or is dangerous.

9 (5) Recommend practices to reduce the use and generation of waste
10 associated with plastic in farming.

11 (6) Incentivize farming practices that are looking to reduce the use and
12 dependence on pesticides in their practices.

13 (7) Advise the Agency with regard to the regulation of plant
14 biostimulants.

15 (8) Recommend studies necessary for the performance of its functions
16 as established under this section.

17 (9) Explore methods and standards for transitioning farmers to practices
18 that reduce pesticide usage.

19 (10) Explore methods and standards for farmers to engage in carbon
20 sequestration or mitigation.

1 (11) Review the seed traits of a new genetically engineered seed
2 proposed for sale, distribution, or use in the State.

3 (12) Study and issue recommendations regarding the feasibility of the
4 use of biodegradable plastics in agriculture and the promotion of the use of and
5 production of biodegradable plastics and similar products in Vermont.

6 (b) Organization of the Board.

7 (1) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall convene the
8 Agricultural Innovation Board. Members of the Board who are not serving in
9 an ex officio capacity shall be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food
10 and Markets, and the Secretary shall designate a chair from among the
11 members of the Board. The Agricultural Innovation Board shall consist of the
12 following 13 members:

13 (A) the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets or designee;

14 (B) an active farmer who is a member of an organization representing
15 the organic farming community;

16 (C) a member from the University of Vermont Center for Sustainable
17 Agriculture;

18 (D) the Director of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets,
19 Agrichemical Program or designee;

20 (E) the Director of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets,
21 Water Quality Program or designee;

1 (F) the Commissioner of Health or a designee with expertise in the
2 effects of pesticides on human health;

3 (G) the Secretary of Natural Resources or designee;

4 (H) a certified crop consultant;

5 (I) an active farmer who is a member of an organization representing
6 the conventional dairy industry in Vermont;

7 (J) an active farmer who is a member of an organization representing
8 fruit or vegetable farmers in Vermont;

9 (K) an active farmer who is a member of an organization
10 representing grass-based, non-dairy livestock farming in Vermont;

11 (L) a soil biologist; and

12 (M) a member of an environmental organization that advocates for
13 policy regarding the management or reduction of toxic substances in the State.

14 (2) Members of the Agricultural Innovation Board shall be appointed for
15 terms of three years, except initially, appointments shall be made such that one
16 member shall serve for a term of one year and one for a term of two years.

17 Members other than ex officio members shall be allowed to serve not more
18 than three consecutive terms.

19 (3) Members of the Agricultural Innovation Board other than ex officio
20 members and those compensated for their participation on the Board shall be
21 entitled to per diem compensation authorized under 32 V.S.A. § 1010(b) for

1 each day spent in the performance of their duties, and each member shall be
2 reimbursed for his or her actual and necessary expenses incurred in carrying
3 out his or her duties. These payments shall be made from the Pesticide
4 Monitoring Revolving Fund under 6 V.S.A. § 929.

5 (4) The Board shall meet no fewer than four times a year.

6 (c) Powers and Duties of the Board. The Agricultural Innovation Board
7 shall:

8 (1) issue a report annually to the General Assembly on or before
9 January 15 that recommends policy solutions to assist farmers in:

10 (A) reducing the use of and exposure to pesticides; and

11 (B) the use of innovative or alternative practices;

12 (2) propose an annual budget report that provides ideas for funding
13 sources for any new programs recommended in the annual report; and

14 (3) survey farmers from every county in the State to help better
15 understand how agricultural inputs, such as pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and
16 plastics, are currently used, as well as current challenges farmers face in
17 reducing these inputs in order to better inform recommendations to be provided
18 in the annual report required under subdivision (1) of this subsection.

19 (d) Seed Review. Prior to sale, distribution, or use in the State of a new
20 genetically engineered seed, a majority of the Agricultural Innovation Board
21 shall approve of the sale, distribution, or use of the seed. In order to ensure the

1 appropriate use of traits of a new genetically engineered seed in the State, the
2 Agricultural Innovation Board may propose to the Secretary limits or
3 conditions on the sale, distribution, or use of a seed or recommend a limited
4 period of time for sale of the seed.

5 Sec. 2. REPEAL; PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL

6 6 V.S.A. § 1102 (Pesticide Advisory Council) is repealed.

7 Sec. 3. 6 V.S.A. § 1083(a)(5) is amended to read:

8 (5) Issue or deny permits to any person for the use of larvicides or
9 pupacides for mosquito control in the waters of the State pursuant to
10 procedures adopted under 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. Such procedures shall include
11 provisions regarding an opportunity for public review and comment on permit
12 applications. Persons applying for a permit shall apply on a form provided by
13 the Agency. The Secretary shall seek the advice of the ~~Vermont Pesticide~~
14 ~~Advisory Council~~ Agricultural Innovation Board when designating acceptable
15 control products and methods for their use, and when adopting or amending
16 procedures for implementing this subsection. Before issuing a permit under
17 this subsection, the Secretary shall find, after consultation with the Secretary of
18 the Agency of Natural Resources, that there is acceptable risk to the nontarget
19 environment and that there is negligible risk to public health.

1 Sec. 4. 6 V.S.A. § 1103(a) is amended to read:

2 (a) General authority. The Secretary shall have responsibility for
3 regulating and controlling the sale, use, storage, treatment, and disposal of
4 pesticides and pesticide wastes, in order to promote the public health, safety,
5 and welfare and protect agricultural and natural resources. In the performance
6 of such duties the Secretary shall act upon the advice of the ~~Pesticide Advisory~~
7 ~~Council~~ Agricultural Innovation Board, and subject to the approval of the
8 Governor.

9 Sec. 5. 6 V.S.A. § 1104 is amended to read:

10 § 1104. POWERS OF SECRETARY

11 The Secretary in furtherance of the purposes of this chapter may:

12 * * *

13 (6) Require pesticide dealers and applicators to keep records of the sale
14 and use of pesticides deemed particularly toxic or hazardous by the ~~Pesticide~~
15 ~~Advisory Council~~ Agricultural Innovation Board and to have such records
16 available for examination by the Secretary or his or her agents at his or her
17 request; the accounting for kinds and amounts of such economic poisons, to
18 whom sold, and where and when used, and the reporting of incidents resulting
19 from accidental contamination or misapplication of pesticides ~~which~~ that
20 present a hazard to humans, animals, or the environment, may be required.

21 * * *

1 (4) requirements for persons selling treated articles to keep or make
2 available to the Secretary records of sale of treated articles the use of which the
3 ~~Pesticide Advisory Council~~ Agricultural Innovation Board has determined will
4 have a hazardous or long-term deleterious effect on the environment, presents
5 a likely risk to human health, or is dangerous; or

6 (5) requirements for reporting of incidents resulting from accidental
7 contamination from or misuse of treated articles the use of which the ~~Pesticide~~
8 ~~Advisory Council~~ Agricultural Innovation Board has determined will have a
9 hazardous or long-term deleterious effect on the environment, presents a likely
10 risk to human health, or is dangerous.

11 (b) At least 30 days prior to pre-filing a rule authorized under subsection (a)
12 of this section with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules under
13 3 V.S.A. § 837, the Secretary shall submit a copy of the draft rule to the Senate
14 Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture and
15 Forestry for review.

16 Sec. 7. 6 V.S.A. § 642 is amended to read:

17 § 642. DUTIES AND AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY

18 (a) The Secretary shall enforce and carry out the provisions of this
19 subchapter, including:

20 (1) Sampling, inspecting, making analysis of, and testing seeds subject
21 to the provisions of this subchapter that are transported, sold, or offered or

1 exposed for sale within the State for sowing purposes. The Secretary shall
2 notify promptly a person who sells, offers, or exposes seeds for sale and, if
3 appropriate, the person who labels or transports seeds, of any violation and
4 seizure of the seeds, or order to cease sale of the seeds under section 643 of
5 this title.

6 (2) Making or providing for purity and germination tests of seed for
7 farmers and dealers on request and to fix and collect charges for the tests made.

8 (3) Cooperating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other
9 agencies in seed law enforcement.

10 (4) Prior to sale, distribution, or use of a new genetically engineered
11 seed in the State and after consultation with ~~a seed review committee convened~~
12 ~~under subsection (e) of this section~~ the Agricultural Innovation Board under
13 section 4964 of this title, review the traits of the new genetically engineered
14 seed. The Secretary may prohibit, restrict, condition, or limit the sale,
15 distribution, or use of the seed in the State when determined necessary to
16 prevent an adverse effect on agriculture in the State.

17 (b) The Secretary shall establish rules to carry out the provisions of this
18 subchapter, including those governing the methods of sampling, inspecting,
19 analyzing, testing, and examining seeds and reasonable standards for seed.

1 ~~(c)(1) The Secretary shall convene a seed review committee to review the~~
2 ~~seed traits of a new genetically engineered seed proposed for sale, distribution,~~
3 ~~or use in the State.~~

4 ~~(2) A seed review committee convened under this subsection shall be~~
5 ~~composed of the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets or designee and~~
6 ~~the following members appointed by the Secretary:~~

7 ~~(A) a certified commercial agricultural pesticide applicator;~~

8 ~~(B) an agronomist or relevant crop specialist from the University of~~
9 ~~Vermont or Vermont Technical College;~~

10 ~~(C) a licensed seed dealer; and~~

11 ~~(D) a member of a farming sector affected by the new genetically~~
12 ~~engineered seed.~~

13 ~~(3) A majority of the seed review committee must approve of the sale,~~
14 ~~distribution, or use of a new genetically engineered seed prior to sale,~~
15 ~~distribution, or use in the State. In order to ensure the appropriate use or traits~~
16 ~~of a new genetically engineered seed in the State, a seed review committee~~
17 ~~may propose to the Secretary limits or conditions on the sale, distribution, or~~
18 ~~use of a seed or recommend a limited period of time for sale of the seed.~~

19 ~~[Repealed.]~~

1 Sec. 8. IMPLEMENTATION; TRANSITION

2 The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall appoint those
3 members of the Agricultural Innovation Board under 6 V.S.A. § 4964 on or
4 before January 1, 2022 so that the Agricultural Innovation Board can fulfill its
5 functions and duties.

6 Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATES

7 This act shall take effect on January 1, 2022, except that the authority of the
8 Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to appoint members of the
9 Agricultural Innovation Board under 6 V.S.A. § 4964(b)(1) shall take effect on
10 July 1, 2021.

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16 (Committee vote: _____)

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Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE