

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Agriculture to which was referred House Bill No. 205  
3 entitled “An act relating to establishing the Small Farmer Diversification and  
4 Transition Program” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and  
5 recommends that the Senate propose to the House that the bill be amended by  
6 striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the  
7 following:

8 Sec. 1. 6 V.S.A. §§ 4608 and 4609 are added to read:

9 § 4608. SMALL FARMER DIVERSIFICATION AND TRANSITION

10 ASSISTANCE

11 (a) The Working Lands Enterprise Board shall award small farmers in  
12 Vermont with grants to diversify production on a farm or to transition from one  
13 form of farming to another. Grants to small farmers shall be used for costs of:

14 (1) diversifying the farm products produced by the applicant;

15 (2) transitioning the applicant from one form of farming to another;

16 (3) processing of farm products on the farm owned or controlled by the  
17 applicant; and

18 (4) developing an accessory on-farm business by the applicant.

19 (b) The maximum amount of a grant to a small farmer under this section

20 shall be \$15,000.00 per farmer per year, and all projects funded by the grant

1 shall be completed within 12 months after receipt of the grant by the small  
2 farmer.

3 (c) The Working Lands Enterprise Board shall develop a short, accessible,  
4 and easily completed application form for the purpose of applications under  
5 this section. The Board also shall simplify and streamline its process for  
6 review and approval of applications under this section.

7 (d) As used in this subchapter:

8 (1) “Farm products” means products principally produced by a small  
9 farmer from:

10 (A) crops grown, growing, or to be grown, including:

11 (i) plants grown for food, feed, or fiber, but excluding trees grown  
12 for timber purposes;

13 (ii) Christmas trees;

14 (iii) maple sap;

15 (iv) horticultural, viticultural, or orchard crops, and

16 (v) pasture; or

17 (B) livestock, born or unborn, including goods produced in  
18 aquacultural operations.

19 (2) “Small farmer” means any person:

20 (A) who owns or operates a small farm subject to the Required  
21 Agricultural Practices;

1           (B) houses not more than the number of animals specified under  
2           section 4857 of this title; and

3           (C) is not permitted as a medium farm or large farm at the time of  
4           application.

5           § 4609. CONFIDENTIALITY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

6           A tax return and related financial documents, correspondence, and  
7           substantiating forms that are submitted by an applicant for financial assistance  
8           to the Working Lands Enterprise Board under this subchapter shall be exempt  
9           from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and shall be  
10          kept confidential.

11          Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION

12          In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Agency of Agriculture,  
13          Food and Markets in fiscal year 2024, \$350,000.00 of one-time funds are  
14          appropriated from the General Fund in fiscal year 2024 to the Agency of  
15          Agriculture, Food and Markets for purposes of implementing the small farmer  
16          diversification and transition grants under the Working Land Enterprise  
17          Program.

18          Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

19          This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

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(Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Senator \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE COMMITTEE