

1 H.423

2 Introduced by Representative Cina of Burlington

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Agriculture; economic development; Vermont Agriculture and Food
6 System Strategic Plan; project implementation

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to appropriate
8 funds to the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board to prioritize and fund
9 implementation of projects identified or proposed in the Vermont Agriculture
10 and Food System Strategic Plan in order to foster food security and resilience
11 and to develop, promote, and maintain healthy communities and ecosystems in
12 the State.

13 An act relating to implementing the Vermont Agriculture and Food System
14 Strategic Plan

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

16 Sec. 1. VERMONT AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEM STRATEGIC
17 PLAN; IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

18 (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

1 (1) The General Assembly directed the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
2 in 10 V.S.A. § 330 to establish and administer the Vermont Farm-to-Plate
3 Investment Program to:

4 (A) increase sustainable economic development and create jobs in
5 Vermont’s food and farm sector;

6 (B) improve soils, water, and resiliency of the working landscape in
7 the face of climate change; and

8 (C) improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters.

9 (2) As part of the charge of the Vermont Farm-to-Plate Investment
10 Program, the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund was tasked with creating a
11 strategic plan for agricultural and food system development.

12 (3) The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund issued the Vermont Agriculture
13 and Food System Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030 (Strategic Plan) in 2020 to,
14 among other charges, stabilize and revitalize Vermont’s agricultural industry
15 and increase Vermont farm and food system resilience and security.

16 (4) With the information gathered from development of the Strategic
17 Plan, the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund is required to identify methods and
18 the funding necessary to strengthen the links among producers, processors, and
19 markets, including:

20 (A) supporting the work of the Working Lands Enterprise Board to
21 strategically invest in farm and food businesses;

1 (B) collaborating with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
2 and the Department of Buildings and General Services to increase procurement
3 of local foods in accordance with 6 V.S.A. § 4601;

4 (C) collaborating with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
5 to increase procurement of local foods by businesses and institutions; and

6 (D) supporting initiatives that improve the marketing of foods from
7 Vermont producers to consumers inside the State and outside of the State.

8 (5) To achieve its goals and carry out its tasks, the Vermont Sustainable
9 Job Fund was authorized to:

10 (A) create an advisory panel with representatives from the
11 agricultural and business communities; and

12 (B) seek and accept funds from private and public entities.

13 (6) The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund has done exemplary work in the
14 development of the Strategic Plan and the identification and implementation of
15 projects under that Plan, but additional investment in the Strategic Plan is
16 needed to foster food security and resilience in the State in order to develop,
17 promote, and maintain healthy communities and ecosystems.

18 (b)(1) In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Agency of
19 Agriculture, Food and Markets in fiscal year 2026 for the Vermont Working
20 Lands Enterprise Board, \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund
21 to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets so that the Vermont Working

1 Lands Enterprise Fund may issue grants to fund projects identified or proposed
2 in the Strategic Plan in order to foster food security and resilience and to
3 develop, promote, and maintain healthy communities and ecosystems.

4 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

5 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.