

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1893 Session of
1999

INTRODUCED BY BUNT, LEH, CAPPABIANCA, COY, SEMMEL, ALLEN,
ARGALL, ARMSTRONG, BAKER, BARD, BARRAR, BELFANTI, BROWNE,
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THOMAS, TRAVAGLIO, VAN HORNE, WALKO, WRIGHT, YUDICHAK, VANCE,
BASTIAN, ZIMMERMAN, ADOLPH, MAJOR, MASLAND, McILHINNEY,
NAILOR, PHILLIPS, ROBERTS, SCHRODER, SHANER, SNYDER, CLYMER,
LUCYK, MARKOSEK, McCALL, MELIO, PESCI, PLATTS, ROHRER,
SEYFERT, B. SMITH AND SOLOBAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1999

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,
SEPTEMBER 29, 1999

AN ACT

1 Providing for emergency drought relief as a result of weather
2 conditions in 1999; and making an appropriation.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Emergency
7 Drought Relief Act.

8 Section 2. Legislative findings and purpose.

9 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

10 (1) Production agriculture is a mainstay of this

Commonwealth's economy, with nearly 50,000 family farms generating \$44,000,000,000 in economic activity each year.

(2) The prolonged drought of 1999 is an unprecedented natural disaster which caused an estimated \$500,000,000 in crop losses and threatens to destroy not only the profitability of our farmers, but also the existence of farmland in this Commonwealth.

(3) It is in the public interest, from the standpoint of the economic well-being of this Commonwealth, to offer financial support to maintain the viability of this critical industry.

Section 3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Crop." Includes:

(1) Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, potatoes, tobacco and dry beans.

(2) Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.

(3) Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets, onions, peppers and mushrooms.

(4) Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees, Christmas trees and flowers.

(5) Pasture.

(6) Timber, wood and other wood products derived from trees.

"Department." The Department of Agriculture of the Commonwealth.

1 "Fund." The Emergency Drought Relief Fund established in
2 section 4.

3 "PASS." The Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service.

4 "Producer." A person engaged in the business of producing
5 crops within this Commonwealth.

6 "USDA-FSA." The United States Department of Agriculture-Farm
7 Service Agency.

8 Section 4. Fund.

9 (a) Establishment.--The Emergency Drought Relief Fund is
10 established.

11 (b) Source.--The source of the fund shall be appropriations.

12 (c) Purpose.--The purpose of the fund is to provide grants
13 under section 6.

14 (d) Administration.--The fund shall be administered by the
15 department under section 5(2).

16 Section 5. Department.

17 The department has the following powers and duties:

18 (1) Promulgate, within 30 days of the effective date of
19 this act, regulations to administer this act. Initial
20 regulations under this paragraph shall not be subject to the
21 act of June 25, 1982 (P.L.633, No.181), known as the
22 Regulatory Review Act.

23 (2) Administer the fund. Up to .08% of the money in the
24 fund may be used by the department for administrative
25 expenses.

26 (3) Enter into agreements with Federal and State
27 agencies as necessary to implement this act.

28 Section 6. Grants.

29 (a) Amounts.--Proceeds from the fund shall be used to
30 provide grants to producers to refund a portion of the premium

1 for multiple-crop insurance purchased and paid for by the
2 producer to be determined as follows:

3 (1) The entire premium for insurance for the 1999 crop
4 year shall be refunded upon proof that the producer has the
5 same or greater coverage for the 2000 crop year.

6 (2) Fifty percent of the premium for insurance for the
7 2000 crop year shall be paid.

8 (b) Eligibility.--Eligibility for or receipt of other
9 drought relief assistance, whether Federal or State, shall not
10 invalidate a producer's eligibility for assistance under this
11 act.

12 Section 7. Appropriation.

13 The sum of \$12,000,000 is appropriated to the Emergency
14 Drought Relief Fund. The money in the fund is continuously
15 appropriated to the fund to carry out the purposes of this act.
16 This appropriation shall not lapse at the end of any fiscal
17 year.

18 Section 8. Effective date.

19 This act shall take effect immediately.