

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 583

PRINTER NO. 642

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

April 25, 2019

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Aument

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 583 amends the Agricultural Area Security Law to provide that agritourism activities cannot be prevented on land protected by an agricultural conservation easement and to define terms.

The bill specifies that an agricultural conservation easement shall not prevent an agritourism activity that:

- Is incidental to a farm’s agricultural use;
- Does not render a portion of the restricted land incapable of being immediately converted to agricultural use; and
- Has been deemed to be an agritourism activity by the county agricultural land preservation board.

The bill also provides for a timeline for county agricultural land preservation boards to consider agritourism applications in a timely manner and establishes the following definitions:

“Agritourism activity” is defined as farm-related tourism or farm-related entertainment activity that:

- Takes place on a farm where agricultural, horticultural or silvicultural crops are grown or farm animals, rural animals or farmed fish are raised; and
- Allows members of the general public, whether or not for a fee, to tour, explore, observe, learn about, participate in or be entertained by an aspect of agricultural production, harvesting, husbandry or rural lifestyle that occurs on the farm.

“Farm” is defined as an operation commercially engaged in agriculture that:

- Is ten (10) or more acres in contiguous area; or
- Has anticipated yearly gross income of at least \$2,000 from agricultural production.

“Anticipated yearly gross income” is defined as gross income normally expected to be generated in one year, without occurrence of a natural disaster or other occurrence or condition beyond the operator’s reasonable control.

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FISCAL IMPACT:

The enactment of Senate Bill 583 will have no adverse fiscal impact on Commonwealth funds.

The provisions requiring the county agricultural land preservation boards to consider agritourism activity applications are routine to the boards' responsibilities to administer the law and should result in minimal costs to the boards.