
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1857 Session of
1999

INTRODUCED BY COY, BUNT, CAPPABIANCA, LESCOVITZ, GEORGE, VEON,
DeWEESE, EVANS, M. COHEN, LEDERER, RIEGER, GORDNER, FRANKEL,
LEH, READSHAW, CALTAGIRONE, ROBERTS, PESCI, BELARDI, LUCYK,
McCALL, WALKO, VAN HORNE, MANDERINO, TANGRETTI, JAMES,
STURLA, MICHLOVIC, PETRARCA, HALUSKA, BEBKO-JONES, FREEMAN,
LAUGHLIN, SURRA, GRUCELA, SEYFERT, SOLOBAY, HANNA, MARKOSEK,
STETLER, SCRIMENTI, WOJNAROSKI, LaGROTTA, CASORIO, SANTONI,
DALEY, STABACK, WATERS, TRAVAGLIO, DALLY, DeLUCA, MICOZZIE,
PISTELLA, PLATTS, LYNCH, BROWNE, BELFANTI, HASAY, STEELMAN,
COLAFELLA, RUFFING AND RAMOS, SEPTEMBER 27, 1999

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,
SEPTEMBER 27, 1999

AN ACT

1 Providing for the Agricultural Drought Emergency Grant Program;
2 establishing and empowering the Agricultural Drought
3 Emergency Disaster Board within the Department of
4 Agriculture; and making an appropriation.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Agricultural
9 Drought Emergency Grant Act.

10 Section 2. Definitions.

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

14 "Board." The Agricultural Drought Emergency Disaster Board

1 established in section 4.

2 "Drought." A period of prolonged dryness which causes
3 extensive damage to crops by preventing their growth or reducing
4 the crop yield by 30% or more.

5 "Eligible recipient." A natural person or a family farm
6 corporation who or which after application is awarded a grant by
7 the Agricultural Drought Emergency Disaster Board.

8 Section 3. Agricultural Drought Emergency Grant Program.

9 (a) Establishment.--There is hereby established in the
10 Department of Agriculture the Agricultural Drought Emergency
11 Grant Program under the direction of the board. The program
12 shall provide Commonwealth assistance, in the form of direct
13 grants, to eligible recipients for losses incurred due to the
14 Drought of 1999.

15 (b) Utilization of grant.--An eligible recipient who
16 receives a grant under this act must use the proceeds of that
17 grant for one or all of the following purposes:

18 (1) Projects located on the affected farm relating to
19 drought mitigation, water management or water conservation.

20 (2) Indemnification of:

21 (i) crop losses from the drought; and/or

22 (ii) livestock productivity losses from the drought.

23 (3) Procurement of livestock feed stocks including
24 mitigation of transportation costs associated with such
25 procurement.

26 (4) Subsidization of crop insurance premiums.

27 (5) Other projects which are authorized by the board.

28 (c) Maximum amount of grant.--The maximum amount of a grant
29 to any one eligible recipient shall be determined by the board.

30 Section 4. Agricultural Drought Emergency Disaster Board.

1 (a) Establishment.--There is hereby established within the
2 Department of Agriculture an administrative board to be known as
3 the Agricultural Drought Emergency Disaster Board which shall
4 implement and administer the provisions of this act.

5 (b) Membership.--The board shall consist of ten members as
6 follows:

7 (1) The Secretary of Agriculture, who shall chair the
8 board.

9 (2) The chairman of the Pennsylvania Emergency
10 Management Agency.

11 (3) The dean of the School of Agricultural Sciences at
12 The Pennsylvania State University.

13 (4) A representative of the Farm Service Agency of the
14 United States Department of Agriculture.

15 (5) Five farmers to be appointed as follows:

16 (i) One farmer shall be appointed by the Governor.

17 (ii) One farmer shall be appointed by the President
18 pro tempore of the Senate.

19 (iii) One farmer shall be appointed by the Speaker
20 of the House of Representatives.

21 (iv) One farmer shall be appointed by the Minority
22 Leader of the Senate.

23 (v) One farmer shall be appointed by the Minority
24 Leader of the House of Representatives.

25 (c) Organization.--The chairman of the board shall call the
26 initial meeting of the board within ten days of the effective
27 date of this section. Thereafter, the board shall meet at least
28 monthly unless convened sooner by the chairman. Six members of
29 the board shall constitute a quorum for all official business of
30 the board.

1 (d) Compensation and expenses.--Compensation of and expenses
2 for members of the board shall be paid by the Department of
3 Agriculture pursuant to Executive Board policies.

4 (e) Powers and duties.--The board shall have the following
5 powers and duties:

6 (1) Establish the Drought Emergency Grant Program by no
7 later than November 1, 1999.

8 (2) Determine the qualifications of eligible recipients
9 consistent with the definition in section 2 and the
10 requirement that at least 51% of an eligible recipient's
11 gross income is earned from agricultural production.

12 (3) Fix the levels of drought damage necessary to obtain
13 a grant.

14 (4) Establish a system of applications and priorities
15 for award of grants including a pro rata system for grant
16 reductions if the number of eligible applicants exceeds the
17 funds appropriated for grants.

18 (5) Promulgate rules relating to the Agricultural
19 Drought Emergency Grant Program after approval by the
20 Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee of the Senate and the
21 Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee of the House of
22 Representatives.

23 (6) Ten days prior to termination, transfer all records
24 and unfinished business to the Department of Agriculture.

25 (7) Take all other actions necessary to implement the
26 provisions of this act.

27 (8) Terminate all business on or before June 30, 2000.

28 Section 5. Audits.

29 The affairs of the board and its successor, the Department of
30 Agriculture, shall be subject to audit by the Auditor General.

1 Section 6. Appropriation.

2 The sum of \$75,000,000 is hereby appropriated to the
3 Agricultural Drought Emergency Disaster Board for the fiscal
4 year July 1, 1999, to June 30, 2000, for the sole purpose of
5 making grants pursuant to this act.

6 Section 7. Effective date.

7 This act shall take effect immediately.