

S.F. No. 4019 – Agriculture Omnibus (1st Engrossment)

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ARTICLE 1 - AGRICULTURE AND RURAL APPROPRIATIONS

Article 1 makes appropriations to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for fiscal year 2022 and 2023.

ARTICLE 2 - BROADBAND APPROPRIATIONS

Section 1 makes technical changes to the 2021 First Special Session, Chapter 10 broadband appropriation language and requires money to be spent by December 31, 2026.

Section 2 establishes a new pilot program to provide broadband service to unserved and underserved areas. Grants may not exceed \$5 million for a single project and may fund up to 75 percent of total project costs. Up to \$15 million of federal broadband money may be used by the commissioner of employment and economic development for this program.

Section 3 directs the commissioner of employment and economic development to prepare and submit a grant plan for \$110.7 million of Minnesota's capital projects fund allocation from the American Rescue Plan to be used for the border-to-border grant program.

Section 4 directs any federal money for broadband development under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to be appropriated to the commissioner of employment and economic development to be used for the border-to-border grant program.

Section 5 allows up to \$15 million of federal broadband money to be used for the broadband line extension program.

Section 6 allows up to \$15 million of federal broadband money to be used for comprehensive statewide mapping if permissible under federal law.

ARTICLE 3 - AGRICULTURE AND RURAL POLICY

Section 1 (13.643) clarifies that identifying personal data is private or nonpublic for those who contact the Minnesota Farm and Rural Helpline.

Section 2 [17.1016] establishes a grant program to help finance new cooperatives that organize to operate a processing facility or to market an agricultural product or service.

Section 3 [17.1162] establishes an agriculture best management practices grant program to support healthy soil management practices.

Sections 4 - 8 (17.117) amend the Agriculture Best Management Practices Loan Program.

Section 4 allows the commissioner to rescind uncommitted allocations.

Section 5 removes the requirement for local government entities to identify which account funds a project.

Section 6 removes the requirement for the local lender to notify local government after loan closing.

Section 7 removes the maximum loan stipulation for a single loan of \$200,000.

Section 8 changes the eligibility for projects relating to water.

Section 9 (18E.04) amends the maximum reimbursement payments from the agricultural chemical response and reimbursement account, raising it from \$350,000 in increments of \$75,000 every two years until it reaches \$575,000 in fiscal year 2027 and each following year.

Section 10 (35.155) states that the commissioner of natural resources has concurrent authority to regulate farmed white-tailed deer in conjunction with the Board of Animal Health, and stipulates that neither entity can issue an emergency stop movement order without the concurrence of the other.

Section 11 (40A.18) allows solar energy generating systems producing one megawatt or less to be installed on agricultural preserve land.

Section 12 (41A.21) clarifies the eligibility for the oriented strand board (OSB) production incentive by being more specific about what production entails, and tracking the level of production quarterly instead of annually.

Section 13 (41B.025) requires the rural finance authority to process a completed loan application within ten business days.

Section 14 (223.17) changes the exemption for grain buyers so those who purchase with cash are exempt from bond requirements regardless of the amount of purchases.

Section 15 (223.17) changes the threshold of accounting reviews for grain buyers from \$5,000,000 to \$7,500,000.

Section 16 (346.155) allows institutions that house animals owned by institutions accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association to possess regulated animals.

ARTICLE 4 - BROADBAND POLICY

Section 1 [116J.3951] establishes the broadband line extension program, which awards grants to extend broadband to unserved locations.

Section 2 (116J.396) allows the border-to-border account to be used for the broadband line extension program.

Section 3 [116J.399] allows broadband service providers to use existing utility easements for broadband installation.