

By: Tepper

H.B. No. 17

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of an agriculture disaster relief grant program; making an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Title 2, Agriculture Code, is amended by adding Chapter 22 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 22. AGRICULTURE DISASTER RELIEF GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 22.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Category D2 drought" means a severe drought as defined by the United States Drought Monitor.

(2) "Category D3 drought" means an extreme drought as defined by the United States Drought Monitor.

(3) "Program" means the agriculture disaster relief grant program established by this chapter.

Sec. 22.002. ESTABLISHMENT OF GRANT PROGRAM. (a) The department shall establish the agriculture disaster relief grant program to provide block grant disaster relief funding to applicants for necessary expenses related to losses of revenue by cotton infrastructure as a consequence of natural disasters involving drought for the 2022 or 2023 crop year.

(b) The department shall adopt rules to implement and administer the program.

Sec. 22.003. GRANT PROGRAM FUND. (a) The agriculture disaster relief grant program fund is an account in the general

1 revenue fund. The fund is composed of:

2 (1) money appropriated to the department for deposit  
3 to the credit of the fund;

4 (2) money transferred by the department to the credit  
5 of the fund from other sources available to the department; and

6 (3) gifts, grants, and donations made to the  
7 department for the purpose of the fund.

8 (b) The fund may be used only by the department to award  
9 grants under the program.

10 Sec. 22.004. ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANT PROGRAM. (a) To be  
11 eligible to receive a grant under the program, an applicant must  
12 meet the eligibility requirements established by department rule  
13 and show that:

14 (1) the grant will be used to support agricultural  
15 supply chain resiliency;

16 (2) the land for which the grant will be used is  
17 located in a county identified by the United States Drought Monitor  
18 as having a Category D2 drought for eight consecutive weeks or a  
19 Category D3 drought at any point during the 2022 or 2023 calendar  
20 year; and

21 (3) the applicant experienced a decline of at least 30  
22 percent in gross receipts or gross revenue in the 2022 or 2023  
23 calendar year as compared to the previous calendar year.

24 (b) Grants under the program may not exceed \$500,000 per  
25 applicant.

26 Sec. 22.005. EXPIRATION OF GRANT PROGRAM. This chapter  
27 expires September 1, 2025.

1           SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date  
2 of this Act, the Department of Agriculture shall adopt rules and  
3 procedures required to implement and administer Chapter 22,  
4 Agriculture Code, as added by this Act.

5           SECTION 3. (a) Section 8.73, Chapter 458 (S.B. 30), Acts of  
6 the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023 (the Supplemental  
7 Appropriations Act), is repealed.

8           (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a) of this section, the  
9 Department of Agriculture may expend amounts appropriated by former  
10 Section 8.73, Chapter 458 (S.B. 30), Acts of the 88th Legislature,  
11 Regular Session, 2023 (the Supplemental Appropriations Act), for a  
12 purpose provided by the former law if the amounts were obligated for  
13 that purpose before the effective date of this Act.

14          SECTION 4. (a) All unobligated and unexpended balances  
15 remaining as of the effective date of this Act from appropriations  
16 made by former Section 8.73, Chapter 458 (S.B. 30), Acts of the 88th  
17 Legislature, Regular Session, 2023 (the Supplemental  
18 Appropriations Act), are appropriated from the same source to the  
19 Department of Agriculture for the two-year period beginning on the  
20 effective date of this Act for the purpose of providing grants under  
21 Chapter 22, Agriculture Code, as added by this Act.

22          (b) The comptroller of public accounts shall deposit the  
23 amount appropriated by Subsection (a) of this section to the credit  
24 of the agriculture disaster relief grant program fund created by  
25 Section 22.003, Agriculture Code, as added by this Act.

26          SECTION 5. This Act takes effect on the 91st day after the  
27 last day of the legislative session.