

By: Miles

H.B. No. 2997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation and funding of the urban farming pilot program and the creation of the Select Committee on Urban Farming.

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

SECTION 1. Title 3, Agriculture Code, is amended by adding Chapter 50E to read as follows:

CHAPTER 50E. URBAN FARMING PILOT PROGRAM AND SELECT COMMITTEE

SUBCHAPTER A. URBAN FARMING PILOT PROGRAM

Sec. 50E.001. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "program" means the urban farming pilot program established under this chapter.

Sec. 50E.002. ESTABLISHMENT OF URBAN FARMING PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) The department by rule shall develop and implement an urban farming pilot program through which the department will award grants if funding for grants is available to urban farmers in this state to establish new urban farms and expand existing urban farms.

(b) The department by rule shall define "urban farm" and "urban farmer" for purposes of this chapter.

(c) The department may operate the program in an area designated as an enterprise zone under Chapter 2303, Government Code, in a municipality with a population of one million or more.

Sec. 50E.003. USE OF AWARDED GRANT MONEY. A grant recipient may use grant money awarded under the program only to cover costs that are approved by the department.

Sec. 50E.004. GRANT RECIPIENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS. A

1 grant recipient shall report information related to the program to  
2 the department in the form and manner and at regular intervals as  
3 prescribed by the department.

4 Sec. 50E.005. EVALUATION BY DEPARTMENT. The department  
5 shall monitor and periodically evaluate:

6 (1) the performance of each grant recipient under the  
7 program;

8 (2) how each grant recipient uses the grant money  
9 awarded under the program; and

10 (3) the effect of the program on the grant recipient  
11 and on the residents of the municipality in which the grant  
12 recipient uses grant money.

13 Sec. 50E.006. FUNDING. The department may seek, accept,  
14 and spend any funds received through appropriations, grants, or  
15 donations from public or private sources for the purposes of the  
16 program.

17 [Sections 50E.007-50E.010 reserved for expansion]

18 SUBCHAPTER B. SELECT COMMITTEE ON URBAN FARMING

19 Sec. 50E.011. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "committee"  
20 means the Select Committee on Urban Farming.

21 Sec. 50E.012. COMPOSITION. (a) The Select Committee on  
22 Urban Farming is composed of:

23 (1) four members of the senate appointed by the  
24 lieutenant governor;

25 (2) four members of the house of representatives  
26 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and

27 (3) two representatives of the department designated

1 by the commissioner.

2 (b) The committee shall elect a presiding officer from among  
3 its members.

4 Sec. 50E.013. COMPENSATION. A committee member serves  
5 without compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for actual  
6 and necessary expenses incurred in performing functions as a  
7 committee member, subject to any applicable limitation on  
8 reimbursement provided by the General Appropriations Act.

9 Sec. 50E.014. COMMITTEE DUTIES. (a) The committee shall:

10 (1) meet at the call of the presiding officer; and

11 (2) conduct an interim study and make recommendations  
12 to the legislature regarding:

13 (A) the performance and operation of the program;

14 (B) the continuation, elimination, or expansion  
15 of the program;

16 (C) urban farming trends, including farming in  
17 sustainable living communities, cooperative crop production, and  
18 vertical farming;

19 (D) capacity for urban farming in this state; and

20 (E) potential effects of urban farming on the  
21 population of this state and on enterprise zones.

22 (b) The committee may request the assistance of state  
23 agencies, departments, or offices to carry out its duties.

24 Sec. 50E.015. REPORT. Not later than December 1, 2012, the  
25 committee shall submit a report based on its findings to:

26 (1) the governor;

27 (2) the lieutenant governor; and

1           (3) the speaker of the house of representatives.

2           [Sections 50E.016-50E.020 reserved for expansion]

3           SUBCHAPTER C. EXPIRATION OF CHAPTER

4           Sec. 50E.021. This chapter expires and the committee is  
5 abolished September 1, 2013.

6           SECTION 2. (a) Not later than January 1, 2012, the  
7 Department of Agriculture shall implement the urban farming pilot  
8 program established under Chapter 50E, Agriculture Code, as added  
9 by this Act.

10           (b) Not later than October 1, 2011, the lieutenant governor,  
11 the speaker of the house of representatives, and the commissioner  
12 of agriculture shall make the appointments and designations  
13 required by Section 50E.012, Agriculture Code, as added by this  
14 Act.

15           (c) Not later than October 15, 2011, the commissioner of  
16 agriculture shall call the first meeting of the Select Committee on  
17 Urban Farming to permit the committee to elect a presiding officer  
18 as required by Section 50E.012(b), Agriculture Code, as added by  
19 this Act.

20           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.