

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to the agriculture and timber
 3 operations cost-share program; creating s. 570.891,
 4 F.S.; providing a short title; providing legislative
 5 findings; establishing a cost-share program within the
 6 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,
 7 subject to legislative appropriation; requiring the
 8 Office of Agricultural Water Policy and the Florida
 9 Forest Service within the department and the
 10 Department of Environmental Protection to make certain
 11 determinations regarding the agriculture and timber
 12 industry; requiring the department to adopt rules;
 13 providing an effective date.

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 15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 17 Section 1. Section 570.891, Florida Statutes, is created
 18 to read:

19 570.891 Agriculture and timber operations cost-share
 20 program.-

21 (1) This act may be cited as the "Protecting Florida's
 22 Natural Resources Act."

23 (2) The Legislature finds that:

24 (a) Maintaining healthy and sustainable agriculture and
 25 timber industries is vital to the state's environment and

26 | natural resources, including significant environmental
27 | contributions to water quality and quantity, air purification,
28 | carbon sequestration, and habitat for threatened and endangered
29 | wildlife species.

30 | (b) The continued expansion of urban and coastal areas has
31 | increased pressure on the agriculture and timber industries and
32 | in recent years, there has been a significant decrease in
33 | agricultural and timber acreage.

34 | (c) To ensure healthy sustainable agriculture and timber
35 | industries, a cost-share program is necessary to provide
36 | incentives to owners of agriculture and timber operations to
37 | continue such activities to the benefit of water quality and
38 | quantity, air purification, carbon sequestration, and habitat
39 | for threatened and endangered wildlife species.

40 | (3) There is a cost-share program established within the
41 | Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, subject to
42 | legislative appropriation, to reimburse the owners of
43 | agriculture and timber operations for up to 75 percent of the
44 | value of the environmental resources and services provided.

45 | (4) (a) The Office of Agricultural Water Policy and the
46 | Florida Forest Service within the department shall determine the
47 | value of water recharge, stormwater filtration, wildlife
48 | habitat, carbon sequestration, and air quality benefits provided
49 | by the agriculture and timber industries.

50 | (b) The Department of Environmental Protection shall work

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51 with the University of Florida Institute of Food and
52 Agricultural Sciences and the agriculture and timber industries
53 to identify industry research that is needed and determine the
54 value of the environmental services provided by such industries.

55 (5) The department shall adopt rules to implement this
56 section.

57 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.