

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Agriculture

BILL: SB 1772

INTRODUCER: Senator Montford

SUBJECT: Environmental Value of Agricultural Lands and Timberlands

DATE: January 28, 2020

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Akhavein</u>	<u>Becker</u>	<u>AG</u>	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	<u>AEG</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

I. Summary:

SB 1772 requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and the agricultural and timber industries to:

- Develop a formula to determine the value that agricultural lands and timberlands in this state provide for water recharge, stormwater filtration, wildfire habitat, and water quality benefits; and
- Develop a cost-share reimbursement program to provide funding incentives to agricultural landowners and timberland owners for the implementation of best management practices. The department may provide up to 75 percent cost share to the landowners based on the values calculated pursuant to this bill.

II. Present Situation:

The Legislature recognizes that urban and coastal areas continue to expand increasing pressures on agricultural lands and timberlands, causing a significant decrease in acreage. Collectively, the agriculture, natural resources, and food industries are significant contributors to the economy of the state of Florida, so maintaining healthy and sustainable agricultural and timber industries is vital. Florida has 17.16 million acres (26,807 square miles) of forestland, representing 50 percent of the state’s total land area, with nearly two-thirds of forestlands privately owned. In 2016, the forest industry sectors directly employed 36,055 persons (fulltime and part-time jobs) and collected \$12.55 billion in industry revenues.¹

¹ University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, “Economic Contributions of the Forest Industry and Forest-based Recreation in Florida in 2016,” See <https://fred.ifas.ufl.edu/economicimpactanalysis/publications/2016-Forest-industry-and-forest-recreation/> (Last visited January 22, 2020).

In 2017, Florida had 47,000 commercial farms, using a total of 9.45 million acres. Florida ranked first in the United States in value of production of cucumbers, grapefruit, oranges, squash, sugarcane, fresh market snap beans, and fresh market tomatoes. The state ranked second in value of production of bell peppers, strawberries, watermelons, fresh market cabbage and fresh market sweet corn. Florida also ranked fourth nationally in the value of production of peanuts. Florida ranks 18th among all states in number of farms and 29th in land in farms. Farm cash receipts from marketing agricultural products in 2017 amounted to \$7.467 billion, a decrease of \$290 million from 2016. Nationally, Florida ranks fourth in the value of vegetable and melon cash receipts at \$1.194 billion, 11th in crop cash receipts with a value of \$6.08 billion, and 18th in total cash receipts.²

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 creates s. 570.233, F.S., to require the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection, the University Of Florida Institute Of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and the agricultural and timber industries to:

- Develop a formula to determine the value that agricultural lands and timberlands in this state provide for water recharge, stormwater filtration, wildfire habitat, and water quality benefits; and
- Develop a cost-share reimbursement program to provide funding incentives to agricultural landowners and timberland owners for the implementation of best management practices. The department may provide up to 75 percent cost share to the landowners based on the values calculated pursuant to this bill.

Section 2 provides that this act shall take effect July 1, 2020.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

² Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, "Florida Agriculture Overview and Statistics," See <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Florida-Agriculture-Overview-and-Statistics> (Last visited January 22, 2020).

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Indeterminate.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Indeterminate.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 570.233 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.