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 Rules

BILL:	CS/CS/CS/SB 290
INTRODUCER:	Rules Committee; Fiscal Policy Committee; Agriculture Committee; and Senator Truenow
SUBJECT:	Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
DATE:	February 12, 2026 REVISED:

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Stokes-Ramos	Becker	AG	**Fav/CS**
2.	Stokes-Ramos	Siples	FP	**Fav/CS**
3.	Stokes-Ramos	Kruse	RC	**Fav/CS**

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/CS/CS/SB 290 makes a number of changes to laws related to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department) and related topics. Specifically, the bill:

- Prohibits a county or municipality from enacting a local policy to restrict the use of gasoline-powered farm or landscape equipment.
- Establishes density requirements for developers who seek to build in small municipalities and provides exemptions from this requirement under certain circumstances.
- Requires the Acquisition and Restoration Council to determine whether any lands surplused by a local governmental entity are suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes, and prohibits local governments from transferring future development rights for such lands.
- Requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to determine whether any state-owned conservation lands are suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes, and requires the department to retain a rural-lands-protection easement for all such lands.
- Removes the Babcock Ranch Advisory Group.
- Adds penalties for contractors who fail to timely compensate their subcontractors and suppliers.
- Adds criminal penalties for receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on a commercial driver license (CDL) exam.
- Repeals statutes requiring Florida's participation in the Southern States Energy Compact.

- Prohibits land application of classes of biosolids besides Class AA biosolids, and removes the requirement that rules adopted by the department with respect to biosolids be ratified by the Legislature.
- Increases insurance requirements and maximum fine amounts for fumigation providers.
- Adds obstruction to the prohibited acts involving permitting entry or inspection.
- Repeals the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.
- Prohibits commercial solicitation on properties that comply with "no solicitation" signage requirements and provides penalties for violation.
- Allows the department to reorganize itself upon approval of the commissioner.
- Modifies eligibility requirements for the Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Emergency Recovery Loan Program.
- Directs the establishment of the Florida Native Seed Research and Marketing Program.
- Creates the Food Animal and Equine Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program to help offset loans incurred for studies leading to a veterinary degree with a specialization in food animal or equine animal veterinary medicine.
- Prohibits local governments from requiring an agricultural property owner to obtain a rural event venue permit or license.
- Replaces the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. with the Citrus Research and Field Trial Foundation Inc. as the advisory council and research body for a citrus research marketing order, and requires the merger of the two foundations.
- Adds the Welaka Training Center as a site that the Florida Forest Service (FFS) may operate to train fire and forest resource managers, adds that the FFS may assess appropriate fees to meet its operational costs regardless of the training location, and renames the Bonifay Forestry Station.
- Allows the FFS to pay the CDL renewal costs for employees whose positions require them to operate equipment requiring a CDL.
- Establishes the Farmers Feeding Florida Program and restricts Feeding Florida from allowing an opposed candidate for elective office to host a food distribution event.
- Prohibits the department from renewing a certificate of registration for an aquaculture facility that is not in compliance.
- Revises various regulations of fairs and fair associations.
- Corrects the definition of a nonprofit agricultural organization for the purpose of providing medical benefit plans.
- Adds "concealed weapon permit" or "concealed weapon permitholder" to the list of words a person is prohibited from wearing or displaying with the intention to mislead, and provides criminal penalties for violation.
- Prohibits the possession, use, manufacture, import, sale, or distribution of signal jamming devices.

Overall, the bill has an indeterminate, yet likely insignificant fiscal impact to the department. It has a likely significant fiscal impact to local governments and private actors. **See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement**.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026, except section 14, which requires permits to comply with the bill by July 1, 2028, and certain local governments to comply with the bill by July 1, 3031.

II. Present Situation:

The present situation for each issue is described below in Section III, Effect of Proposed Changes.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Gasoline-Powered Equipment

Present Situation

The governing body of a county or municipality has broad legislative powers to enact ordinances and local laws, perform governmental functions, and exercise power to promote the health, welfare, safety, and quality of life of a local government's residents. Ordinances address a wide variety of local issues, from government structure and zoning laws to speed limits and noise ordinances. Procedures for passing local ordinances are prescribed by the Legislature and differ only slightly between counties and municipalities.

A number of local governments have introduced and adopted ordinances that prohibit the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers and chainsaws, including Naples[1] and Miami Beach.[2] These local governments have cited noise and environmental pollution concerns motivating the ordinances. The city of Winter Park prohibited the use of internal combustion engine leaf blowers, but voters later reversed the ban.[3] Lawn care agencies were reported to express concern about the cost of switching to electric, and that electric leaf blowers do not hold a charge long enough for the required work.[4][5]

The Florida Right to Farm Act[6] provides that "a local government may not adopt any ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy to prohibit, restrict, regulate, or otherwise limit an activity of a bona fide farm operation on land classified as agricultural land pursuant to s. 193.461, where such activity is regulated through implemented best management practices or interim measures" developed by DEP, the department, or water management districts.

Section 366.032(2), F.S., also prohibits (except to enforce the Florida Building Code and Florida Fire Prevention Code) a municipality, county, special district, development district, or other political subdivision of the state from restricting or prohibiting the use of an appliance using the fuels or energy types used, delivered, converted, or supplied by the entities above.

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[1] Naples Ordinance 2020-14542
[2] Miami Beach Ordinance 2024-4589
[3] Winter Park Ordinance 3292-24
[4] Ezzy, C. (2024, December 28). Winter Park leaders keep ban on gas-powered leaf blowers; Residents and workers outraged." *WKMG*, *WKMG News 6 & ClickOrlando*. www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2024/02/01/winter-park-leaders-keep-ban-on-gas-powered-leaf-blowers-residents-and-workers-outraged/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[5] Winter Park voters reverse ban on gas-powered leaf blowers." *Spectrum News*. https://mynews13.com/fl/orlando/news/2025/03/12/winter-park-voters-reverse-ban-on-gas-powered-leaf-blowers (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[6] Section 823.14, F.S.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 1 creates s. 125.489, F.S., to prohibit a county from enacting or enforcing a resolution, ordinance, rule, code, or policy or to take any action that restricts or prohibits the use of gasoline-powered farm equipment or gasoline-powered landscape equipment and provides related definitions. The bill does not prohibit or limit a county from encouraging the use of alternative farm or landscape equipment, such as battery-powered equipment.

Section 4 creates s. 166.036, F.S., to prohibit a municipality from enacting or enforcing a resolution, ordinance, rule, code, or policy or to take any action that restricts or prohibits the use of gasoline-powered farm equipment or gasoline-powered landscape equipment and provides related definitions. The bill does not prohibit or limit a municipality from encouraging the use of alternative farm or landscape equipment, such as battery-powered equipment.

Ecologically Significant Parcels in Low-Density Municipalities

Present Situation

The Community Planning Act governs how local governments create and adopt their local comprehensive plans.[7] Local comprehensive plans must include principles, guidelines, standards, and strategies for the orderly and balanced future land development of the area and reflect community commitments to implement the plan. The Community Planning Act intends that local governments manage growth through comprehensive land use plans that facilitate adequate and efficient provision of transportation, water, sewage, schools, parks, recreational facilities, housing, and other requirements and services.[8] The comprehensive plan is implemented via land development regulations. Each county and municipality must adopt and enforce land development regulations, such as zoning or other housing-related ordinances, which are consistent with and implement their adopted comprehensive plan.[9]

Under the Community Planning Act, a development permit is any official action of a local government that has the effect of permitting the development of land including, but not limited to, building permits, zoning permits, subdivision approval, rezoning, certifications, special exceptions, and variances.[10] A development order is issued by a local government and grants, denies, or grants with conditions an application for a development permit.[11]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 2 amends s. 163.3164, F.S., to define an "ecologically significant parcel" as a land parcel located in a low-density municipality that is undeveloped and designated as rural, conservation, agricultural, or greenspace in a local government comprehensive plan. It defines a "low-density municipality" as a municipality existing on or before January 1, 2025, which is less than 2,500 acres in total size and contains a population of 5,000 or fewer legal residents.

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[7] Section 163.3161, F.S.
[8] Section 163.3161(4), F.S.
[9] Section 163.3202, F.S.
[10] Section 163.3164(16), F.S.
[11] *See* ss. 125.022, 163.3164(15), and 166.033, F.S.

Section 3 amends s. 163.3202, F.S., to prohibit municipalities from approving a development on an ecologically significant parcel in a low-density municipality unless the developer attests that the development will not exceed 1 residential unit per 20 acres or unless the applicant attests that the residential units being constructed will be used for the express purpose of providing housing for the family members of the applicant. The commission or council of a low-density municipality may waive these density requirements by a unanimous vote.

Section 5 amends s. 212.055, F.S., to update the statute being referenced for the definition of "public facilities" in accordance with the changes made in section 2 of the bill.

Surplus of State-Owned Lands

Present Situation

State law designates the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Board of Trustees)[12] as the entity responsible for determining which state lands (the title to which are vested in the Board of Trustees) may be surplused.[13] The statute addresses two different categories of state-owned lands: conservation lands and nonconservation lands:[14] For all conservation lands, the Acquisition and Restoration Council[15] must first make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.[16] Conservation lands may only be surplused if the Board of Trustees, by an affirmative vote of at least three members, determines that the lands are no longer needed for conservation purposes.[17] Requests for surplusing lands may be made by any public or private entity or person.[18] Local government requests for surplus lands through purchase or exchange are expedited throughout the surplusing process.[19]

The Board of Trustees owns approximately 3.3 million acres of uplands, 3.1 million acres of which is conservation land and 0.2 million acres of nonconservation land. There are also about 0.5 million acres of conservation easements.[20] As of June 30, 2025, there were 268 properties owned by the Board of Trustees that were candidates for disposition or in the disposition process,

[12] The Board of Trustees is a four-person board consisting of the Governor, the Attorney General, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Commissioner of Agriculture. *See* s. 253.02(1), F.S.
[13] Section 253.0341(1), F.S.
[14] *Id.*
[15] Section 259.035, F.S., provides that the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) is a 10-member group with representatives from four state agencies, four appointees of the Governor, one appointee by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and one appointee by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services. ARC has responsibility for the evaluation, selection and ranking of state land acquisition projects on the Florida Forever priority list, as well as the review of management plans and land uses for all state-owned conservation lands. Dep't of Environmental Protection, *Acquisition and Restoration Council,* https://floridadep.gov/lands/environmental-services/content/acquisition-and-restoration-council-arc (last visited Feb. 12, 2026); *see also* s. 253.0341(6), F.S. (providing that before any decision by the Board of Trustees, ARC must review and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees concerning the request for surplusing, and must determine whether the request is compatible with the resource values of and management objectives for such lands).
[16] Section 253.0341(1), F.S.
[17] FLA. CONST. art. X, s. 18.
[18] Section 253.0341(11), F.S.
[19] Section 253.0341(1), F.S.
[20] Florida Department of Environmental Protection. *FAQ: Disposition of state lands and facilities annual report.* https://floridadep.gov/lands/bureau-public-land-administration/content/faq-disposition-state-lands-and-facilities-annual (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)

comprising an estimated 263 acres with an estimated value of $9.84 million. All requests to surplus conservation lands must be submitted to the lead managing agency for review and recommendation to the Acquisition and Restoration Council, and all requests to surplus nonconservation lands must be submitted to the Division of State Lands for review and recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

For all surplus lands, the Division of State Lands must determine the sale price based on the "highest and best use" of the property to ensure the maximum benefit and use to the state. "Highest and best use" means the reasonable, probable, and legal use of vacant land or an improved property which is physically possible, appropriately supported, financially feasible, and results in the highest value.[21] Agricultural use of a land is not always considered the "highest and best use" for that particular parcel. Instead, exceptions are made for the value of agricultural land to be assessed based on current use rather than its fair market value.[22]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 6 amends s. 253.0341, F.S., to provide additional requirements for the surplus of state-owned lands. The bill requires the Acquisition and Restoration Council to determine whether any lands surplused by a local governmental entity on or after January 1, 2024, are suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes. A local governmental entity may not transfer future development rights for any surplused lands determined to be suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes on or after July 1, 2024.

DEP, in coordination with the department, shall determine whether any state-owned conservation lands are suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes, and may surplus such suitable state-owned lands. The department shall retain a rural-lands-protection easement for all state-owned conservation lands acquired on or after January 1, 2024, that are determined to be suitable for bona fide agricultural production. Proceeds from the sale of such surplused lands must be deposited into the Incidental Trust Fund within the department. By January 1, 2027, DEP shall provide a yearly report of such surplused state-owned conservations lands.

Babcock Ranch Preserve

Present Situation

The Babcock Ranch covers an area of 143 square miles and comprises 81,499 acres in Charlotte County and 9,862 acres in Lee County. In July of 2006, a Palm Beach real estate development firm, Kitson & Partners, purchased the entire 91,361 acre Babcock Ranch. The entity retained approximately 18,000 acres for development and sold to the State of Florida the remaining 73,000 acres.

This acquisition was made possible through the Babcock Ranch Preserve Act that was passed by the Legislature in 2006. The Act authorized the Babcock Ranch Preserve (preserve) as a working ranch and to protect regionally important water resources, diverse natural habitats, scenic landscapes and historic and cultural resources in southwest Florida.

[21] Section 253.0341(8), F.S.
[22] FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 4(a).

Kitson & Partners entered into an agreement with the state of Florida to form a public/private partnership to manage the preserve. A subsidiary of Kitson & Partners, Babcock Ranch Management LLC, entered into a management agreement with the Board of Trustees and Lee County to provide management services for the preserve.

Section 259.1053, F.S., creates the Babcock Ranch Advisory Group to assist the department by providing guidance and advice concerning the management and stewardship of the Babcock Ranch Preserve. The Babcock Ranch Advisory Group has not met since 2017.[23]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 7 amends s. 259.1053, F.S., to remove the Babcock Ranch Advisory Group from statute.

Payments to Subcontractors

Present Situation

Many of Florida's subcontractors and material suppliers are small, locally-owned businesses that depend on timely payments to stay in business. Late or withheld payments may also delay project completion.

Section 287.1351, F.S., prohibits a vendor that is in default on any contract with an agency or has otherwise repeatedly demonstrated an inability to fulfill the terms and conditions of previous state contracts from submitting a bid, proposal, or reply to an agency or enter into or renew a contract to provide goods or services to an agency after its placement on the suspended vendor list. The suspended vendor list[24] includes vendors that have been removed from the vendor list for "failing to fulfill any of its duties specified in a contract with the State."[25]

Section 287.0585, F.S., requires that if a state contractor fails to pay subcontractors and suppliers without cause within 7 working days after receiving payment, the contractor must pay the subcontractors or suppliers a penalty of 0.5% of the amount due per day, up to 15% of the outstanding balance due, and may be ordered by a court to pay restitution for attorney's fees and other related costs. This does not apply when the contract between the contractor and subcontractor provides otherwise.

For construction projects specifically, section 255.073, F.S., requires contractors to pay subcontractors and suppliers within 10 days of receiving payment, and those subcontractors and suppliers must in turn pay their own subcontractors and suppliers within 7 days of receiving payment. The contractors or subcontractors who owe the payments may dispute the charges in writing but otherwise must pay any undisputed charges within these timeframes. Payments not made within the required timeframe bear interest at 2% per month.

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[23] See Babcock Ranch Advisory Group 10-year plan, https://www.fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/Our-Forests/State-Forests/Babcock-Ranch-Preserve/Babcock-Ranch-Preserve-10-Year-Land-Management-Plan (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[24] DMS. *Vendor registration and vendor lists*. https://www.dms.myflorida.com/business_operations/state_purchasing/state_agency_resources/vendor_registration_and_vendor_lists (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[25] Section 287.042, F.S.; *See* Rule 60A-10.006, F.A.C.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 8 amends s. 287.1351, F.S., to add that a vendor that has failed to timely compensate its subcontractors or suppliers will be placed on the suspended vendor list.

Section 18 amends s. 489.105, F.S., to define "subcontractor" and "supplier" as the same meaning provided in s. 558.002, F.S.

Section 19 creates s. 489.1295, F.S., to require a contractor to pay its subcontractors or suppliers within 45 days after the contractor is paid for the respective services or materials, or in accordance with the terms of the contract for such services, labor, or materials, unless there is a bona fide dispute regarding the amount due. A contractor who knowingly or willfully violates this section is subject to disciplinary action as provided in s. 489.129, F.S., which includes penalties such as revoking registration, requiring financial restitution, and imposing fines.

Section 56 reenacts s. 287.056, F.S., related to disqualification from state contract eligibility of vendors placed on the suspended vendor list, to incorporate the amendments made to s. 287.1351, F.S.

Section 57 reenacts s. 287.138, F.S., related to contracting with entities of foreign countries of concern, to incorporate the amendments made to s. 287.1351, F.S.

Cheating on CDL Examinations

Present Situation

Applicants to drive vehicles requiring a CDL must undergo an exam that tests the applicant's:
- Eyesight;
- Ability to read and understand highway signs regulating, warning, and directing traffic;
- Knowledge of the traffic laws of this state pertaining to the class of motor vehicle for which he or she is applying;
- Knowledge of the effects and dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and controlled substances; and
- Knowledge of any special requirements for the safe operation of the class of vehicle for which he or she is applying to be licensed to operate.

He or she must also perform an actual demonstration of his or her ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in the safe operation of a motor vehicle or combination of vehicles of the type covered by the license classification which the applicant is seeking, including an exam of the applicant's ability to perform an inspection of his or her vehicle.[26]

Section 322.36, F.S., prohibits a person from authorizing or knowingly permitting a motor vehicle owned or controlled by him or her to be operated on any highway or public street except by a person authorized to operate a motor vehicle under this chapter. Anyone who violates this provision commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

[26] Section 322.12(4), F.S.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 9 amends s. 322.12, F.S., to add that an applicant for a CDL who receives unauthorized assistance from another person on the exam that tests his or her knowledge of traffic laws and signage pertaining to the respective class of vehicle commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

Section 10 amends s. 322.36, F.S., to add that a person who knowingly or willfully provides unauthorized assistance to an applicant for the CDL exam commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

Southern States Energy Compact Repeal

Present Situation

Section 377.711, F.S., establishes Florida as a member of the Southern States Energy Compact (compact). The compact is performed by the Southern States Energy Board (SSEB). The SSEB is a non-profit interstate compact organization created by state law in 1960 and consented to by Congress[27] with a broad mandate to contribute to the economic and community well-being of the southern region.[28] Its mission is to enhance economic development and the quality of life through innovations in energy and environmental policies, programs, and technologies. The SSEB serves its members directly by providing assistance designed to develop effective energy and environmental policies and programs and represents its members before governmental agencies at all levels.

Section 377.712, F.S., provides for Florida's participation on the SSEB, including requiring the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives to each appoint one member to the SSEB. The section also authorizes departments, agencies, and officers of the state and its subdivisions to cooperate with the SSEB if the activities have been approved by either the Governor or the member appointed by the Governor.

According to the department, Florida has not used and does not anticipate using the services provided by the SSEB. Participating in the compact costs Florida approximately $45,000 annually.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Sections 11, 12, and 13 repeal s. 377.71, F.S., s. 377.711, F.S., and s. 377.712, F.S., respectively. This removes from statute all language referencing the Southern States Energy Compact and Florida's requirement to participate in it.

Biosolids Management

Present Situation

The proper treatment and disposal or reuse of domestic wastewater is an important part of protecting Florida's water resources. The majority of Florida's domestic wastewater is controlled

[27] Public Laws 87-563 and 92-440.
[28] Southern States Energy Board. *About SSEB*. http://www.sseb.org/about/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)

and treated by centralized treatment facilities regulated by the DEP. Florida has approximately 2,000 permitted domestic wastewater treatment facilities.[29] Approximately 30% of Florida's population relies on an estimated 2.6 million septic systems for wastewater disposal.[30] Florida law does not require most domestic wastewater treatment facilities to accept septage or food establishment sludge such as grease. It does, however, require untreated septage and food establishment sludge to be transported to DEP-approved facilities, and prohibits them from being land applied.[31]

When domestic wastewater is treated, solid, semisolid, or liquid residue known as biosolids[32] accumulates in the wastewater treatment plant and must be removed periodically to keep the plant operating properly.[33] Biosolids also include products and treated material from biosolids treatment facilities and septage management facilities regulated by the DEP.[34] The collected residue is high in organic content and contains moderate amounts of nutrients.[35]

The DEP has stated that wastewater treatment facilities produce about 340,000 dry tons of biosolids each year.[36] Biosolids can be disposed of in several ways including placement in a landfill, distribution and marketing as fertilizer, and land application to pasture or agricultural lands.[37] Biosolids are subject to regulatory requirements established by the DEP to protect public health and the environment.[38]

Land application of biosolids involves spreading biosolids on the soil surface or incorporating or injecting biosolids into the soil at a permitted site.[39] This practice provides nutrients and organic matter to the soil on agricultural land, golf courses, forests, parks, mine reclamation sites, and other disturbed lands. Composted and treated biosolids are used by landscapers and nurseries, and by homeowners for their lawns and home gardens.[40]

The DEP regulates three classes of biosolids for beneficial use: Class AA, Class A, and Class B biosolids.[41] The classes are categorized based on treatment and quality, with Class AA biosolids

[29] DEP. *General facts and statistics about wastewater in Florida,* https://floridadep.gov/water/domestic-wastewater/content/general-facts-and-statistics-about-wastewater-florida (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[30] DEP. *Onsite Sewage Program*. https://floridadep.gov/water/onsite-sewage (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).
[31] Rule 62-6.010, F.A.C.
[32] Section 373.4595, F.S., defines biosolids are the solid, semisolid, or liquid residue generated during the treatment of domestic wastewater in a domestic wastewater treatment facility and include products and treated material from biosolids treatment facilities and septage management facilities. The term does not include the treated effluent or reclaimed water from a domestic wastewater treatment facility, solids removed from pump stations and lift stations, screenings and grit removed from the preliminary treatment components of domestic wastewater treatment facilities, or ash generated during the incineration of biosolids.
[33] DEP. *Domestic wastewater biosolids*. https://floridadep.gov/water/domestic-wastewater/content/domestic-wastewater-biosolids (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[34] Rule 62-640.200(6), F.A.C.
[35] *Id*.
[36] DEP. (2019). *Biosolids in Florida*. https://www.florida-stormwater.org/assets/MemberServices/Conference/AC19/02%20-%20Frick%20Tom.pdf#:~:text=Biosolids%20and%20Management%20in%20Florida%20Estimated%20Total%20Production,two-thirds%20are%20beneficially%20used%20and%20onethird%20is%20landfilled (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[37] *Id*.
[38] Rule 62-640, F.A.C.
[39] EPA. *Land application of biosolids*. https://www.epa.gov/biosolids/land-application-biosolids (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[40] *Id*.
[41] Rule 62-640.200, F.A.C.

receiving the highest level of treatment, and Class B receiving the lowest.[42] Treatment of biosolids must reduce pathogens, the attractiveness of the biosolids for pests like insects and rodents, and the amount of toxic metals in the biosolids.[43]

Class AA biosolids can be distributed and marketed like other commercial fertilizers with few further restrictions.[44]

Biosolids are regulated under Rule 62-640 of the Florida Administrative Code. The rules provide minimum requirements, including monitoring and reporting requirements, for the treatment, management, use, and disposal of biosolids. The rules are applicable to wastewater treatment facilities, appliers, and distributors[45] and include permit requirements for both treatment facilities and biosolids application sites.[46]

Each permit application for a biosolids application site must include a site-specific nutrient management plan (NMP) that establishes the specific rates of application and procedures to apply biosolids to land.[47] Biosolids may only be applied to land application sites that are permitted by the DEP and have a valid NMP.[48] Biosolids must be applied at rates established in accordance with the NMP and may be applied to a land application site only if all concentrations of minerals do not exceed ceiling and cumulative concentrations determined by rule.[49] According to the St. Johns Water Management District, application rates of biosolids are determined by crop nitrogen demand, which can often result in the overapplication of phosphorus to the soil and can increase the risk of nutrient runoff into nearby surface waters.[50]

Once a facility or site is permitted, it is subject to monitoring, record-keeping, reporting, and notification requirements.[51] The requirements are site-specific and can be increased or reduced by the DEP based on the quality or quantity of wastewater or biosolids treated; historical variations in biosolids characteristics; industrial wastewater or sludge contributions to the facility; the use, land application, or disposal of the biosolids; the water quality of surface and ground water and the hydrogeology of the area; wastewater or biosolids treatment processes; and the compliance history of the facility or application site.[52]

The land application of Class A and Class B biosolids is also prohibited within priority focus areas in effect for Outstanding Florida Springs if the land application is not in accordance with a

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[42] *Id.*; DEP. *Domestic wastewater biosolids*.
[43] Rule 62-640.200, F.A.C.
[44] DEP. *Domestic wastewater biosolids*; National Biosolids Data Project. *Florida biosolids*. https://www.biosolidsdata.org/florida (last visited Feb. 12, 2026); Rule 62-640.850, F.A.C.
[45] Rule 62-640.100, F.A.C.
[46] Rule 62-640.300, F.A.C.
[47] Rule 62-640.500, F.A.C.
[48] *Id*.
[49] Rule 62-640.700, F.A.C.
[50] Hoge, V. R., Environmental Scientist IV, St. Johns River Water Management District. *Developing a biosolids database for watershed modeling efforts*, *abstract available at* http://archives.waterinstitute.ufl.edu/symposium2018/abstract_detail.asp?AssignmentID=1719 (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[51] Rule 62-640.650, F.A.C.
[52] *Id*.

NMP that has been approved by the DEP.[53] The NMP must establish the rate at which all biosolids, soil amendments, and nutrient sources at the land application site can be applied to the land for crop production while minimizing the amount of pollutants and nutrients discharged into groundwater and waters of the states.[54]

Between 2018 and 2024, the number of biosolids land application sites decreased by about 40%. Florida Class AA and Class B biosolids are also marketed and distributed out of state.[55] In 2024, approximately 41,000 dry tons of Class B biosolids were land applied in Florida, compared to approximately 327,000 dry tons of Class AA biosolids marketed and distributed, and 93,000 dry tons of biosolids sent to landfills, representing an increase in Class AA biosolids and landfilled biosolids and a decrease in Class B land applied biosolids since 2021.[56]

Section 403.0855, F.S., provides legislative findings and requires the DEP to adopt rules for biosolids management. The statute requires all biosolids application sites to meet the DEP rules in effect at the time of the renewal of the biosolids application site permit or facility permit, effective July 1, 2020. Permittees applying Class A or Class B biosolids shall ensure a minimum unsaturated soil depth of 2 feet between the depth of biosolids placement and the water table level at the time of application. Permittees shall also be enrolled in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services best management practices program or be within an agricultural operation enrolled in the program for the applicable commodity type.

Fertilizer Regulation

Section 576.011(14), F.S., defines "fertilizer" to mean any substance which contains one or more recognized plant nutrients and promotes plant growth, controls soil acidity or alkalinity, provides other soil enrichment, or provides other corrective measures to the soil. The term does not include unmanipulated animal or vegetable manures, peat, or compost which make no such claims. Any person or company who distributes fertilizer in Florida and whose name appears on the fertilizer label as the guarantor is responsible for obtaining a license from the department. The fee for obtaining a fertilizer license is $200 and licenses expire on June 30 of each year.[57]

Any fertilizer distributed in this state in containers shall have a label that includes the following information:

- The brand and grade.
- The guaranteed analysis.
- The name and address of the licensee.
- The net weight.
- The sources from which the nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium are derived.
- The sources of secondary plant nutrients and micro plant nutrients if guaranteed, claimed, or advertised.[58]

[53] Section 373.811(4), F.S.
[54] *Id*.
[55] Email from DEP On File with Senate Agriculture Committee
[56] *Id*.
[57] Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. (2026). Fertilizer licensing and tonnage reporting. https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Fertilizer-Licensing-and-Tonnage-Reporting (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[58] Section 576.031(1), F.S.

If distributed in bulk, two labels containing the information required above shall accompany delivery and be supplied to the purchaser at time of delivery with the delivery ticket, which shall show the certified net weight.[59]

Every licensee shall pay the department an inspection fee to fund the fertilizer inspection program and shall quarterly report to the department the tonnage of fertilizer sold in the state.[60] The department is authorized to enter any public or private premise or carrier during regular business hours in the performance of its duties relating to fertilizers and fertilizer business records. The department is directed to sample, test, inspect, and analyze fertilizer sold within this state and may collect fees to cover associated costs.[61]

The Legislature finds that nitrogen and phosphorous residues have been found in groundwater, surface water, and drinking waters in excess of established water quality standards and that some fertilization-management practices could be a source of such contamination. As such, nutrient application rate recommendations are under review by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences so that they can reflect the latest methods of producing agricultural commodities and changes to nutrient application practices.[62]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 14 amends s. 403.0855, F.S., to require that permittees of a biosolids land application site permitted after July 1, 2020 shall ensure that only Class AA biosolids are applied to the soil, effective July 1, 2028. This section states that local governments that do not transport biosolids for land application outside of their respective boundaries must comply with the Class AA biosolids land application requirement by July 1, 3031, and clarifies that this does not prohibit local governments from transporting Class B biosolids outside their boundaries to a Class AA biosolids treatment facility or waste-to-energy facility. It also removes the requirement that rules adopted by the department pursuant to this section be ratified by the Legislature.

Pest Control Examinations, Licensing, and Certification

Present Situation

For structural pest control (pest control provided to homes or other structures), Florida law requires that each pest control business location must:

- Be licensed by the department,
- Carry the required insurance coverage ($250,000 per person and $500,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and $250,000 per occurrence and $500,000 in the aggregate for property damage, or a combined single limit coverage of $500,000 in the aggregate),[63] and
- Employ full-time a Florida-certified operator in charge of the pest control operations of the business location. This operator must be certified in the categories in which the business operates:
    - General Household Pest and Rodent Control,

[59] Section 576.031(2), F.S.
[60] Section 576.041, F.S.
[61] Section 576.051, F.S.
[62] Section 576.045(1), F.S.
[63] Section 482.071, F.S.

- Termite and Other Wood-Destroying Organisms Control,
- Lawn and Ornamental Pest Control, and/or
- Fumigation.[64]

The business license fee is $300, and the fee for each employee identification card is $10.[65]

A certified operator is an individual who has passed an examination administered by the department in any of four certification categories:

- General Household and Rodent Control;
- Lawn and Ornamental Pest Control;
- Termite and Other Wood-Destroying Organisms Control; and
- Fumigation.[66]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 15 amends s. 482.071, F.S., to require that people applying for pest control business licenses or renewals who will offer fumigations as part of their operations to submit to the department a certificate of insurance covering $1,000,000 per person/$2,000,000 per occurrence of bodily injury, $1,000,000 per occurrence/$2,000,000 in the aggregate of property damage, or combined single-limit coverage of $2,000,000 in the aggregate.

Section 16 amends s. 482.161, F.S., to change the fine that the department may impose for a violation of the Structural Pest Control Act from the Class II category to the Class III category, which increases the fine limit from $5,000 to $10,000.

Section 17 amends s. 482.165, F.S., to change the civil penalty for which the department may institute a civil suit from the Class II to the Class III category for any violation for which the department may issue a notice to cease and desist for the practice of pest control without a license from the department.

Obstructing Inspection

Present Situation

The Division of Food Safety is directly responsible for assuring the public of a safe, wholesome and properly represented food supply. It accomplishes this through the permitting and inspection of food establishments, inspection and evaluation of food products, and the performance of specialized laboratory testing on a variety of food products sold and/or produced in Florida.[67]

Section 500.147, F.S., authorizes the department to have free access at all reasonable hours to any food establishment, any food records, or any vehicle being used to transport or hold food in commerce for the purpose of inspection or sampling.

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[64] Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. (2026). *Pest control licensing and certification*. https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Pest-Control/Licensing-and-Certification (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[65] *Id.*
[66] Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. (2026). *Pest control FAQ*. Pest Control FAQ / Pest Control / Business Services / Home - Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[67] *See* https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Food-Safety (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)

Section 500.04, F.S., prohibits refusal to permit entry or inspection, or to permit the taking of a sample, as authorized by s. 500.147, F.S.

According to the department, the Division of Food Safety has reported experiences of food establishments obstructing inspection by creating inhospitable conditions for inspectors that make inspection difficult to perform.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 20 amends s. 500.04, F.S., to add obstruction to the prohibited acts involving permitting entry or inspection or sample taking as authorized by s. 500.147, F.S.

Section 58 reenacts s. 500.177, F.S., related to the penalty for violation of s. 500.04, F.S., for the purpose of incorporating the amendments made by the bill to s. 500.04, F.S.

Healthy Food Financing Initiative

Present Situation

In 2016, the Florida Legislature directed the department to establish a Healthy Food Financing Initiative Program (program) to provide financial assistance for the rehabilitation or expansion of grocery retail outlets located in underserved or low-income communities.[68] The department was directed to draw upon and coordinate the use of federal, state, and private loans or grants, federal tax credits, and other types of financial assistance. The goal of the program is to improve public health and well-being of low-income children, families, and older adults by increasing access to fresh produce and other nutritious foods at participating grocery outlets that are required to allocate at least 30 percent of their retail space to the sale of perishable foods, which may include fresh or frozen dairy products, fresh produce, and fresh meats, poultry, and fish.[69]

For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, $500,000 in nonrecurring funds was appropriated to the department to implement the program.[70]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 21 repeals s. 500.81, F.S., the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

Product Mislabeling

Present Situation

Section 500.93, F.S., provides definitions for “egg,” “egg product,” “FDA,” “meat,” “milk,” and “poultry” or “poultry product” to align with the federal definitions. The statute grants the department rulemaking authority to enforce the FDA’s standard of identity for milk, eggs, egg products, meat, poultry, and poultry products and prohibit the sale of plant-based products mislabeled as milk, eggs, egg products, meat, poultry, and poultry products in the state. It provides that this subsection is effective upon the enactment into law of a mandatory labeling

[68] Section 500.81, F.S.
[69] Section 500.81, F.S.
[70] Chapter 2016-221, Laws of Florida.

requirement to prohibit the sale of plant-based products mislabeled as milk, eggs, egg products, meat, poultry, and poultry products by any 11 of the group of 14 states identified in statute. [71]

The statute requires the department to notify the Division of Law Revision upon the enactment into law of mandatory labeling requirements by any 11 of the group of 14 states identified in statute.[72]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 22 amends s. 500.93, F.S., to add in a cross reference previously omitted.

Health Studio Registration Exemptions

Present Situation

The Health Studio Act, ss. 501.012-501.019, F.S., regulates health studios that enter into contracts for health studio services with consumers. "Health studios" includes, among other things, a gym that offers its members the use of weight-training and cardiovascular equipment. The act requires studios to:

- Register with the department;
- Include specific provisions in every contract with a consumer, such as the consumer's total payment obligations, and cancellation provisions;
- Provide a security bond, generally ranging from $10,000 to $25,000, depending on the value of outstanding contracts with the studio; and
- Refrain from prohibited practices, such as committing an intentional fraud.

The following health studios or health-related businesses are exempt from registration with the department:[73]

- Nonprofit organizations that have tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service;
- Gymnastics schools that engage in instruction and training only;
- Golf, tennis, or racquetball clubs that do not offer physical exercise equipment;
- A program or facility offered and used solely for the purpose of dance, aerobic exercise, or martial arts that does not use physical exercise equipment;
- Country clubs that primarily provide social or recreational amenities to its members; and
- A program or facility offered by an organization for the exclusive use of its employees and their family members.

Changes in the health studio industry have created additional types of businesses not contemplated at the creation of the statute which bear similarities to the types of businesses exempt under s. 501.013, F.S.

[71] The 14 states are composed of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.
[72] *Id.*
[73] Sections 501.0125-.013, F.S.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 23 amends s. 501.013, F.S., to add that the department may exempt any other businesses or activities not in existence as of July 1, 2026, from ss. 501.012-501.019, F.S.

Unauthorized Commercial Solicitation

Present Situation

Section 501.022, F.S., prohibits home solicitation sales, as defined in s. 501.021, F.S., without first obtaining a valid home solicitation sale permit. Violation of this statute is a first-degree misdemeanor. Some local ordinances in Florida impose further restrictions on home solicitation sales. For example, Leon County prohibits such solicitation on properties that display the locally-required "No Solicitation" sign,[74] the town of Palm Beach prohibits such solicitation outside of specified hours and on properties that display a "No Solicitation" sign,[75] and the city of Belle Isle[76] prohibits such solicitation outside of specified hours.[77]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 24 creates s. 501.062, F.S., to provide legislative intent and prohibit commercial solicitation on properties that comply with "no commercial solicitation" signage requirements as provided in the section. The section also provides penalties for violation, including a noncriminal violation punishable with a $500 fine for the first violation and a second-degree misdemeanor for a second or subsequent violation.

Departmental Reorganization Powers

Present Situation

Section 20.04, F.S., outlines the required structure of the executive branch of state government. Subsection 20.04(7), F.S., states that unless authorized by law, department heads may not reallocate duties and functions specifically assigned by law to a specific unit of the department, but they can do so for duties and functions assigned generally to the department. Department heads may recommend the establishment of additional units, but additional divisions may only be established by statutory enactment, while other units may be initiated by the department and established as recommended by the Department of Management Services and approved by the Executive Office of the Governor, or by statutory enactment.

Section 570.07, F.S., outlines the functions, powers, and duties of the department.

[74] Chapter 12, Article IV, Sec. 12-82, Leon County Code of Laws.
[75] Chapter 78, Article I, sec. 78-1, Palm Beach, Florida, Code of Ordinances.
[76] Ch. 20, sec. 20-2, see https://library.municode.com/fl/belle_isle/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH20PESO_S20-4PROBSOPE (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[77] Chapter 20, sec. 20-2, Belle Isle, Florida, Code of Ordinances.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 25 amends s. 570.07, F.S., to add that the department shall have the functions, powers, and duties to reorganize departmental units upon approval of the commissioner, notwithstanding s. 20.04(7), F.S.

Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Emergency Recovery Loan Program

Present Situation

The Agriculture and Aquaculture Producers Emergency Recovery Loan Program, established by s. 570.822, F.S., makes loans to agriculture and aquaculture producers that have experienced damage or destruction from a declared emergency. Loan funds may be used to restore, repair, or replace essential physical property or remove vegetative debris from essential physical property.

Under the program, the department is authorized to make low-interest or interest-free loans of up to $500,000 to eligible applicants. An approved applicant may receive no more than one loan per declared disaster, two loans per year, and five loans within any three-year period. The term of each loan is 10 years.

To be eligible an applicant must:

- Own or lease a bona fide farm operation damaged or destroyed as a result of a declared natural disaster located in a county that experienced a declared natural disaster; and
- Maintain complete and acceptable farm records, pursuant to criteria published by the department, and present them as proof of production levels and bona fide farm operations.[78]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 26 amends s. 570.822, F.S., to add that eligible applicants for the program must be a United States citizen and a legal resident of this state before or on the date of the declared emergency. If the applicant is an entity as defined in s. 605.0102, F.S., it must be wholly owned and operated in the United States and have an active certificate of status issued by the Department of State pursuant to chapter 605, F.S.

Florida Native Seeds

Present Situation

Wildflowers are recognized as essential to Florida's ecological health, economy, and natural beauty. The Florida Wildflower Foundation protects, connects, and expands native wildflower habitats through education, research, planting, and conservation.[79]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 27 creates s. 570.832, F.S., which directs the Florida Wildflower Foundation to coordinate with the department to establish the Florida Native Seed Research and Marketing Program. The goal of the program is to conduct research designed to expand the availability and

[78] Section 570.822(3), F.S.
[79] See Florida Wildflower Foundation. *What we do*. https://www.flawildflowers.org/what-we-do/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)

uses of native seeds and strengthen the market position of the state's native seed industry through marketing campaigns.

Food Animal and Equine Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

Present Situation

Florida has experienced a shortage of food animal veterinarians caring for livestock and food animals, particularly in rural areas. Nationally, over 72% of new veterinary graduates go into companion animal practices, with average starting salaries of $140,000, while around 3% of new graduates pursue food animal practice, with starting salaries averaging $100,000.[80] About 8% of new graduates pursue equine practice, with starting salaries averaging $95,000, reflecting an upward trend in equine practice income.[81] Since 2014, new graduates have increasingly pursued companion animal practice while the number pursuing food animal practice has decreased.[82] Student loan debt can be a major factor driving new graduates to companion animal practice rather than food animal practice. Having a greater number of food animal veterinarians working in the state can help ensure animal health, food safety, and sufficient emergency response during disease outbreaks.

The federal Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, authorized by the National Veterinary Medical Services Act[83] and administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides veterinary medicine education loan repayments of up to $40,000 per year for veterinarians who provide agricultural animal veterinary services in a designated veterinary shortage area.[84]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 28 creates s. 570.846, F.S., to establish the Florida Food Animal and Equine Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program. The bill authorizes the department to make payments that offset loans incurred for studies leading to a veterinary degree with a specialization in food animal or equine veterinary medicine, for up to three new eligible candidates per year. For each eligible candidate, the department may make loan principal repayments of up to $25,000 each year for up to 5 years. To be eligible, a candidate must have graduated from a college of veterinary medicine accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association, have received a Florida veterinary medical license, have obtained a Category II Accreditation from the USDA, and be a practicing food animal or equine animal veterinarian in this state who cares for food animals or equine animals at least 20 hours per week. Candidates are ineligible if they are also receiving financial assistance from the federal Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program as established in 7 U.S.C. part 3151a. The department may adopt any rules necessary to administer the program.

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[80] Larkin, M, (2025, October 15). *Inflation continues to dampen gains in veterinarian salaries, fewer new grads entering full time employment.* American Veterinary Medical Association. https://www.avma.org/news/inflation-continues-dampen-gains-veterinarian-salaries-fewer-new-grads-entering-full-time (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[81] *Id*.
[82] *Id*.
[83] National Veterinary Services Act, Public Law No. 108-61, 117 Stat. 2014 (2003). https://www.congress.gov/108/plaws/publ161/PLAW-108publ161.pdf (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[84] USDA. *The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program*. https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/veterinary-medicine-loan-repayment-program (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)

Agritourism

Present Situation

Section 570.85, F.S., provides legislative intent to promote agritourism as a way to support agricultural production. It prohibits local governments from adopting or enforcing a local ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy that prohibits, restricts, regulates, or otherwise limits an agritourism activity on land classified as agricultural. It does not limit the powers and duties of local governments to address substantial offsite impacts of agritourism activities.

An "agritourism activity" is defined to mean any agricultural related activity that is consistent with a bona fide farm, livestock operation, or ranch or in a working forest which allows the general public to view or enjoy its activities for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes. These activities include farming, ranching, historical, cultural, civic, ceremonial, training and exhibition, or harvest-your-own activities and attractions. An agritourism activity does not include the building of new or additional structures or facilities that are intended primarily to house, shelter, transport, or otherwise accommodate the general public. An activity is deemed to be an agritourism activity regardless of whether the participant paid to participate in the activity.[85]

In order to promote and perpetuate agriculture throughout the state, farm operations are encouraged to engage in agritourism. An agricultural land classification may not be denied or revoked due to the construction, alteration, or maintenance of a nonresidential farm building, structure, or facility on a bona fide farm which is used to conduct agritourism activities. The land it occupies shall be considered agricultural in nature as long as the building, structure, or facility is an integral part of the agricultural operation. The buildings, structures, and facilities, and other improvements on the land, must be assessed at their just value and added to the agriculturally assessed value of the land.[86]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 29 amends s. 570.85, F.S., to prohibit a local government from requiring an agricultural property owner to obtain a rural event venue permit or license. **Section 30** amends s. 570.86, F.S., to define a "rural event venue."

Citrus Marketing Order Advisory Council

Present Situation

There are thousands of small agricultural producers in Florida who depend on scientific research and marketing campaigns to grow and market their crops. Most cannot afford to own and operate their own laboratories and marketing firms or maintain the staff it would take to run them. However, these small producers sometimes formally organize to establish a product-specific marketing order and vote to contribute a self-imposed assessment or fee for activities such as

[85] Section 570.86(1), F.S.
[86] Section 570.87, F.S.

research, marketing, and regulating trade practices and product grades.[87] Section 573.104, F.S., provides for marketing orders to become effective when consented to by a majority of producers or handlers of such commodities in the state. One such marketing order in Florida is citrus. Florida citrus was established in 1939 as a federal marketing order under the USDA.[88]

Section 573.112, F.S., provides that when a marketing order is issued, the department must appoint an advisory council to advise the department in administering the marketing order. Advisory councils must be composed of 7 members and an alternate for each member, the majority of whom must be producers. Members must be nominated by the producers of the agricultural commodity from the state at large and appointed by the department. Advisory council members may not receive a salary for such services, but the department may employ personnel to support the marketing order, with the funds to pay such personnel coming from the marketing order. For a citrus marketing order specifically, the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. (CRDF), a nonprofit direct-support organization of the University of Florida, is designated as the advisory council and research body of the marketing order. CRDF was established in 2009 to advance disease and production research and product development for Florida's citrus growers.[89] Its board of directors must be composed of 13 members, including 10 citrus growers, 2 representatives of the university's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and 1 member appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture. They are also entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses.

The Citrus Research and Field Trial Foundation, Inc. (CRAFT), is a nonprofit direct-support organization of the department, established in 2019 to address the need for broad scale field trials of citrus greening management practices.[90] It has received over $85 million in funds since 2019 allocated for grower payments for large-scale field trials to combat citrus greening, including funding from CRDF.[91] In its present state, the CRAFT board of directors is composed of the Florida State Plant Health Inspection Service Director, 5 citrus growers, and 1 Florida citrus nursery representative, appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture.[92]

A university direct-support organization, as provided by s. 1004.28, F.S., is a non-profit organization organized and operated exclusively to receive, hold, invest, and administer property and make expenditures to or for the benefit of a state university in Florida. A direct-support organization, as provided by s. 570.691, F.S., is an organization authorized by the department and established to provide assistance, funding, and promotional support for programs of the department. The Commissioner of Agriculture or their designee may serve on the board of trustees and the executive committee of any such direct support organization.

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[87] Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. *Agricultural marketing orders FAQ*. https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Fruit-and-Vegetables/Agricultural-Marketing-Orders-FAQ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[88] United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. *905 Florida Citrus*. https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/moa/905-florida-citrus (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[89] Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. *About Citrus Research and Development Foundation*. https://citrusrdf.org/about/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).
[90] Citrus Research and Field Trial Foundation, Inc. *Background*. https://craftfdn.org/background/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[91] Citrus Research and Field Trial Foundation, Inc. *Funding*. https://craftfdn.org/craft-funding/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[92] Citrus Research and Field Trial Foundation, Inc. *Leadership*. https://craftfdn.org/board/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 31 amends s. 573.112(7), F.S., to replace CRDF with CRAFT as the advisory council and research body for a citrus research marketing order. The board of directors of CRAFT must be composed of the Florida State Plant Health Inspection Service Director and 7 members appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture who are citrus growers, as well as 1 member who is a Florida citrus nursery representative. All such members will serve without compensation but are entitled to reimbursement from the foundation for per diem and travel expenses.

Section 32 amends s. 581.031(32), F.S., to replace CRDF with CRAFT in allowing the department to conduct or cause to be conducted research projects which are recommended by the foundation.

Section 39 amends s. 601.13(3), F.S., to replace CRDF with CRAFT as the body able to recommend citrus production research conducted pursuant to chapter 573, F.S.

Section 54 creates an unnumbered section of statute to merge CRDF into CRAFT, subject to chapter 617, F.S., related to the merger of nonprofit corporations. CRDF must enter into a plan with CRAFT for the merger, and the merger must be completed by October 1, 2026. Any funds held in trust which were donated to or earned by CRDF must be transferred to CRAFT and must be used for their original purposes. The transfer of any program, activity, duty, or function under this act includes the transfer of any related records and unexpended balances of appropriations, allocations, or other funds. CRAFT shall become the custodian of any property of CRDF on October 1, 2026, or on the date specified in the merger plan, whichever occurs first.

Limited Poultry Producer Annual Bird Limit

Present Situation

Section 583.01, F.S., currently defines the term "dealer" to mean any person, firm, or corporation, including a producer, processor, retailer, or wholesaler, that sells, offers for sale, or holds for the purpose of sale in this state 30 dozen or more eggs or its equivalent in any one week, or more than 384 dressed birds in any one week. The definition creates limited sale poultry requirements to benefit operators of small poultry farms, to provide a level of economic and regulatory relief relative to production and sale of limited poultry. Florida Administrative Code 5K-4.033 further defines a "Limited Poultry and Egg Farm Operation" as limited to 20,000 birds annually.

At the federal level, Public Law 90-492, known as the Poultry Product Inspection Act (PPIA), exempts poultry producers who slaughter or process the products of 20,000 poultry birds or fewer from certain inspection requirements of the act.[93]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 33 amends s. 583.01, F.S., to change the dressed bird limit of a poultry "dealer" from 384 birds weekly[94] to 20,000 birds annually. This change will align state law with federal law.

[93] 21 U.S.C. § 464.
[94] 384 birds weekly adds up to 19,968 birds annually.

Florida Forest Service Training Centers

Present Situation

Florida Forest Service (FFS) has the primary responsibility for the prevention, detection, and suppression of wildfires wherever they may occur. It must provide firefighting crews and develop a training curriculum for forestry firefighters.

Section 590.02, F.S., grants the FFS the authority to pay the cost of the initial CDL exam fee for employees whose position requires them to operate equipment requiring a license, but does not include the cost of CDL renewal. The FFS employs more than 1,250 people in more than 90 job classes. The FFS had 20 different job classes that require a Class A or B CDL as a condition of employment, as of 2018. The Department of Financial Services prohibits the use of public funds to pay license or exam fees under Chapter 69I-40.002(23), F.A.C., unless specifically authorized by law.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 34 amends s. 590.02, F.S., to add the Welaka Training Center as a site that the FFS may operate to train fire and forest resource managers, and adds that the FFS may determine and assess appropriate fees to meet its operational costs and grant free meals, room, and scholarships, regardless of the location of the training. The bill also adds CDL renewal costs to the CDL costs paid by the FFS.

The bill also names the Bonifay Forestry Station the John Michael Mathis Forestry Station in honor of the late Mr. John Michael Mathis.

Farmers Feeding Florida Program

Present Situation

The Farmers Feeding Florida Program (program) was temporarily created during the 2025 legislative session and funded through the General Appropriations Act.[95] The bill permanently codifies this temporary program. The program provides funding and authority to Feeding Florida to purchase, transport, and distribute non-Emergency Food Assistance Program (non-TEFAP) fresh food products for the benefit of food insecure residents. The program supports Florida farmers while connecting them to families in need. In Florida, the USDA found that 12% of households were food insecure in 2023,[96] while Feeding America estimates that 3.2 million Floridians were food insecure that year.[97]

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a USDA U.S.-grown food distribution program for low-income households that is administered in Florida by the department. The Farmers Feeding Florida Program distributes fresh food outside of TEFAP food.

[95] Chapter 2025-198, Laws of Florida.
[96] Rabbitt, M. P., Reed-Jones, M., Hales, L. J., & Burke, M. P. (2024). *Household food security in the United States in 2023*. USDA. https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/_laserfiche/publications/109896/ERR-337.pdf?v=39293 (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[97] Feeding America. https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/overall/florida (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 35 creates s. 595.421, F.S., to establish the Farmers Feeding Florida Program to coordinate with Feeding Florida or its successor entity to acquire, transport, and distribute non-TEFAP fresh food products for the benefit of residents who are food insecure due to a lack of local food resources, accessibility, and affordability. Feeding Florida shall submit monthly reports to the department detailing the amount of food purchased, itemized by commodity type, and purchase and delivery locations and dates. Feeding Florida shall also submit quarterly reports to the legislative appropriations committees detailing the amount of food distributed, itemized by commodity type, and the distribution locations. Foods purchased by Feeding Florida through the program are restricted to charitable purposes for hunger relief and may not reenter the wholesale, retail, or secondary markets. The bill also restricts Feeding Florida from allowing an opposed candidate for elective office to host a food distribution non-emergency event during the election season.

Aquaculture Process Modernization

Present Situation

The Florida Aquaculture Policy Act established that aquaculture is agriculture and consolidated state regulatory responsibilities under the department. Florida's aquaculture industry produces the greatest variety of aquatic species of any state in the nation. Moreover, aquaculture is Florida's most diverse agribusiness. The state's subtropical climate, extensive marine and freshwater resources, cargo shipping infrastructure, and extensive coastline have made the state's aquaculture industry uniquely diverse. There are approximately 1,000 certified aquaculture farms in Florida, located in every region of the state, which produce an estimated 1,500 varieties of fish, aquatic plants, mollusks, crustaceans, turtles, amphibians, and alligators for ornamental, food and bait markets as well as for sporting, conservation, and educational purposes.[9899]

Sovereign submerged lands are lands in Florida that include tidal lands, islands, sand bars, shallow banks, and lands waterward of the ordinary or mean high water line, beneath navigable fresh water or beneath tidally-influenced waters.[100] To conduct aquaculture activities on sovereign submerged lands in Florida, an individual must obtain a lease from the Board of Trustees.[101] The department accepts and reviews applications and provides recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees may approve, approve with modifications, or deny the application.[102]

An individual engaging in aquaculture must obtain an aquaculture certificate of registration from the department.[103]

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[98] *See* https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/91723/file/FDACS-P-02145-2020FLAquacultureIndustryOverview.pdf (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[99] Ch. 597, F.S.
[100] Rule 18-21.003(67), F.A.C.; s. 253.03(1), F.S.
[101] Sections 253.68 and 597.010, F.S.
[102] Rule 18-21.021(1)(q), F.A.C.
[103] Section 597.004(1), F.S.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 36 amends s. 597.004, F.S., to restrict the department from renewing a certificate of registration for a facility that is not compliant with this section unless the renewal application includes documentation of corrective action, and to impose a 3-year reapplication waiting period for revoked or suspended certificates of registration. The bill also updates the scientific name of the Florida bass to *Micropterus salmoides*.

Section 37 amends s. 597.010, F.S., to allow, rather than obligate, the department to adjust annual rental fees for leases.

Florida Wine Trust Fund

Present Situation

The Legislature declared that viticulture, the production and utilization of grapes, is an underdeveloped agricultural commodity enterprise in this state. The Legislature recognizes that Florida possesses many resources and geographic advantages that favor the expansion and growth of present-day viticulture into a broad-based, economically viable industry. The growth potential of the present industry offers good opportunities for local economic development and supply trade. The development of viticulture is compatible with the economies, lifestyles, and interests of both rural and urban Florida.[104]

Further, the Legislature finds that factors such as minimal new grape cultivar development, lack of printed information on production and processing, minimal understanding of winemaking techniques and requirements that will capitalize on the unique characteristics of available grape cultivars, minimal understanding of grape juice processing requirements, lack of fresh fruit handling and processing technology specifically for muscadine grape cultivars, lack of quality standards for wine and other processed grapes, lack of assistance and printed information for overall business planning and marketing, and lack of coordination of the many diverse interests and expertises which could contribute to the further development of viticulture in the state are inhibitory to the development of viticulture to the potential of which it is reasonably capable, going into the 21st century.[105]

The Florida Viticulture Policy Act creates the Florida Wine Advisory Council, State Wine Plan, Florida Farm Winery Program, and Florida Wine Trust Fund to support the wine and viticulture industries in Florida.[106]

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 38 amends s. 599.012, F.S., to make conforming changes replacing "viticulture" with "wine" as the products promoted by the Florida Wine Trust Fund, and adding "wine" to the topics of research for which the Florida Wine Trust Fund can provide grants.

[104] Section 599.001 F.S.
[105] *Id*
[106] Chapter 599, F.S.

Public Fair Charter and Permitting Process Modernization

Present Situation

The Legislature first passed laws for the purpose of regulating state fair associations and operations by enacting ch. 7388, L.O.F, in 1917. In 1974, the Legislature enacted ch. 74-322, L.O.F., which created the Florida State Fair Authority to deal exclusively with the staging of the annual state fair in Tampa, Florida. The last major changes to the statute occurred when the statute was reviewed in 1993 under provisions of the Regulatory Sunset Act. At that time, it was revised and reenacted by the provisions of ch. 93-168, L.O.F.

Currently there is no mechanism in statute for the denial or remediation of fair charter applications. Applicants must record the proposed charter with the judge of the circuit court for the county in which the principal office of the association will be located. Applicants are also required to publish a notice of intention to apply in a local newspaper for four consecutive weeks, and to publish any amendments to their charter in the same manner. A fair association approved by the board of county commissioners is required to submit its charter and any amendments to the circuit judge of the county where its principal office is located and to file a copy with the department.

The department is required to issue a permit within 10 days after the permit application requirements have been fulfilled.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 40 amends s. 616.001, F.S., to remove the definitions of community, county, district, regional, and state fairs, which are included under "annual public fair." The removal of these definitions also removes the requirements that the agricultural products of each fair be produced in or be typical of its respective geographic area, and that the majority of the board of directors of each fair shall reside, be employed, or operate a business in its respective geographic area. It removes the requirement that district fairs pay at least $25,000 in cash premiums or awards to exhibitors, and that district fairs have exhibits representing basic resources in agriculture and industry of each county served by the fair. It also retains the definition "public fair or exposition" to include that it benefits and develops the educational agricultural, horticultural, livestock, charitable, historical, civic, cultural, scientific, and other resources of this state, or any county, municipality, or other community in this state.

Section 41 amends s. 616.01, F.S., to remove the minimum requirement of 25 persons to incorporate a fair association. The bill also creates a mechanism for denial of applications and a process for remediation before resubmission. It also requires the proposed charter submitted by approved applicants to be notarized. The bill adds requirements for the proposed charter to include provision for ex officio membership, the name of an elected member of the board of county commissioners who will serve as an ex officio member of the board of directors of the association, the official email address of the association, and the language for the oath that the applicant will take.

Section 42 amends s. 616.02, F.S., to limit the number of incorporated fair associations per county to one, excluding the state fair and fair associations incorporated before the bill effective

date. The department may not approve a charter incorporating a new fair association in a county where one already exists, except at the discretion of the Commissioner of Agriculture.

Section 43 amends s. 616.03, F.S., to remove the requirement that a fair association applicant send a notice to the department of the intention to apply to the circuit court for the charter, that the notice be published in a newspaper in the county of the association each week for four consecutive weeks, that the notice briefly summarize the charter and objectives of the proposed association, and that the proposed charter be on file in the office of the clerk of the circuit court during the publication period. The proposed charter must first be approved by the department before being submitted to the board of county commissioners of the county where the principal office of the association will be located.

Section 44 amends s. 616.05, F.S., to remove the public notice requirement for association charter amendments that was removed for proposed charters in section 31.

Section 45 amends s. 616.051, F.S., to remove the public notice requirement for dissolving a fair association and to allow that remaining assets be distributed to the county in which the principal office of the association is located, unless otherwise specified by the property deed.

Section 46 amends s. 616.07, F.S., to remove the requirement for remaining assets of a dissolved association to be distributed to any county or municipality, and to remove the provision allowing the board of directors to designate the public project that will benefit from the funds or the manner in which the property will be used. It also removes the requirement that property contributed by a municipality or county be reconvened to that respective municipality or county.

Section 47 amends s. 616.101, F.S., to clarify that the threshold of annual attendance of 25,000 is based on recorded attendance from the previous year, and that a new fair association must follow the financial reporting requirements of a fair association whose fair has an annual attendance of 25,000 or fewer. It also adds the requirement that a fair association review its charter every 5 years and submit a certified copy to the department that incorporates any amendment made in the last 5 years. A designated member of the association shall attest that the submitted charter is accurate and factual.

Section 48 amends s. 616.15, F.S., to clarify that the application for a permit for the annual public fair shall be submitted to the department at least 90 days, rather than 3 months, before the fair. It adds the requirements that the permit applicant provide a copy of the association's charter which incorporates all amendments made and a complete listing of all exhibits required. It removes the requirement that the applicant provide a written statement subscribed by an association officer that the main purpose of the association is to conduct a public fair for the benefit of the resources of the geographic area represented by the fair. It also changes or removes the names of several organizations given as examples in the list of possible exhibitors for which permit applicants must disclose their premium list. It removes several requirements for the permit application and adds them to requirements to be sent to the department 21 days before the fair: proof of liability insurance of at least $300,000 per occurrence, a copy of the association's most recent annual financial statement, and a list of all current members of the board of directors of the association and their contact information.

Section 49 amends s. 616.251, F.S., to exempt the Florida State Fair Authority from the requirements of part I of this chapter.

Section 55 amends s. 288.1175, F.S., regarding certified agriculture education and promotion facilities, to update the statutes referencing fair associations to be consistent with the changes made by this bill.

Section 59 reenacts s. 212.08(13), F.S., related to limitations on exemptions to sales, rental, use, consumption, distribution, and storage tax, for the purpose of incorporating amendments made by the bill to s. 616.07, F.S.

Section 60 reenacts s. 616.185, F.S., related to trespass on public fairgrounds or facilities, for the purpose of incorporating amendments made by the bill to s. 616.15, F.S.

Agricultural Organization Medical Benefits

Present Situation

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)[107]

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010 stipulates a number of requirements for health insurers, including making coverage available to all individuals and employers,[108] without exclusions for preexisting medical conditions[109] and without basing premiums on any health-related factors. PPACA imposes many insurance requirements, such as coverage of essential health benefits,[110] prohibition on lifetime dollar limits[111] on essential health benefits, rating and underwriting standards, and other requirements.[112] PPACA preempts any state law that prevents the application of a PPACA.

Individuals may be exempt from the requirements of the PPACA if they are a member of a health care sharing ministry, which are not classified as health insurance under federal law and therefore do not need to meet the requirements for health insurers.[113] To qualify for this exemption, health care sharing ministries are required to be classified under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and exempt from taxes under section 501(a), among other requirements.[114]

[107] P.L. 111-148, 124 Stat. 119-1945 (2010). PPACA was amended by P.L. 111-152, the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010.
[108] PPACA s. 1201; PHSA s. 2702 (42 U.S.C. § 300gg-1).
[109] 42 U.S.C. § 300gg-3.
[110] Florida Department of Financial Services, Division of Consumer Services. (2025, October). *Health care reform and you: Your guide to the Affordable Care Act*. https://myfloridacfo.com/docs-sf/consumer-services-libraries/consumerservices-documents/understanding-coverage/consumer-guides/english---health-care-reform-brochure.pdf (last visited Feb. 12, 2026).
[111] PPACA s. 1001; PHSA s. 2711 (42 U.S.C. § 300gg-11).
[112] The federal Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017 eliminated the individual coverage mandate tax penalty, effective 2019. Public Law No. 115-97.
[113] 26 U.S.C. § 5000A(d)(2)(B).
[114] *Id*.

Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code provides tax exemptions for religious, charitable, scientific, educational, and other specified organizations.[115] Section 501(c)(5) provides tax exemptions for labor, agricultural, and horticultural organizations.[116]

501(c)(5) agricultural organizations are also allowed to offer medical benefit plans in several states. As with health care sharing ministries, these plans are not classified as health insurance under federal law and therefore do not need to meet the requirements for health insurers. For example, the American Farm Bureau Federation offers medical benefit plans to its members in several states[117] as an alternative to health insurance coverage, which aims to offer lower costs for individual benefits to members and their families, self-employed farmers, and others.[118] However, these plans are not compliant with PPACA and often require medical underwriting[119] that may affect eligibility and rates,[120] impose a waiting period of at least six months for pre-existing conditions,[121] and are not required to provide essential health benefits.

Section 624.4032, F.S., authorizes nonprofit agricultural organizations to offer medical benefit options to their members. The term "nonprofit agricultural organization" means an organization that meets the following criteria:

- Is domiciled in Florida.
- Is exempt from federal income tax under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Was created primarily to promote programs for the development of rural communities and the economic stability and sustainability of farmers in Florida.
- Exists to serve its members beyond only offering medical expense plans.
- Collects annual dues from its members.
- Was in existence before 1945.
- Is composed of members who, collectively, are residents of the majority of counties in this state.

Because such medical benefit plans are not insurance, various state statutes relating to regulation of forms and rates, financial regulations, availability of guaranty funds in the event of an insolvency and other consumer protections, and mandated benefits will not apply to nonprofit agricultural organization plans.

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[115] 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3).
[116] 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(5).
[117] Arkansas (2023 SB 324), Indiana (IN Code s. 27-1-2.2-4), Iowa (IA s. 505.20), Kansas (KS Stat s.40-2222), Missouri (2025 SB 79), Nebraska (NE Code s. 44-7,119), North Dakota (2023 SB 2349), Ohio (2025 SB 100), South Dakota (2021 SB 87), Tennessee (TN Code s. 56-2-121), Texas (TX Ins Code s. 1682.005).
[118] Franklin, N. (2024, October 22). *Farm bureau launches new health plan that is everything but 'insurance.'* Insurance Newsnet. https://insurancenewsnet.com/oarticle/farm-bureau-launches-new-health-plan-that-is-everything-but-insurance (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[119] Medical underwriting is a process used by insurers to determine the health status of an applicant for insurance coverage, and to determine whether to offer an applicant coverage, at what price, and with what exclusions or limits. See https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/medical-underwriting/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[120] Farm Bureau Health Plans Tennessee. *Home*. https://fbhealthplans.com/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)
[121] Farm Bureau Health Plans Tennessee. *Individual and family plans*. https://fbhealthplans.com/plans/individual-family-plans/ (last visited Feb. 12, 2026)

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 50 amends s. 624.4032, F.S., to correct the definition of a nonprofit agricultural organization, changing it from an organization exempt from federal income tax under s. 501(c)(3) to one exempt under s. 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Unlawful Use of Badges and Concealed Weapon Permit

Present Situation

Section 843.08, F.S., punishes false personation of a law enforcement officer or other specified person. A person commits a false personation offense if he or she falsely assumes or pretends to be a law enforcement officer or other person specified in the statute and takes upon himself or herself to act as such or to require any other person to aid or assist him or her in a matter pertaining to the duty of any specified person.

Section 843.085(1) and (5), F.S., provides that it is a first degree misdemeanor to wear or display any authorized indicia of authority, including any badge, insignia, emblem, identification card, or uniform, or any colorable imitation thereof, of any federal, state, county, or municipal law enforcement agency, or other criminal justice agency, with the intent to mislead or cause another person to believe that he or she is a member of the agency or is authorized to wear or display the item containing the indicia or related words, unless appointed by the Governor pursuant to chapter 354, F.S., authorized by the appropriate agency, or displayed in a closed or mounted case as a collection or exhibit.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 51 amends s. 843.085, F.S., to add "concealed weapon permit" or "concealed weapon permitholder" to the list of words a person is prohibited from wearing or displaying with the intention to mislead or cause another person to believe that he or she is a member of the agency or is authorized to wear or display the item containing the words. Violation of this prohibition is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

Signal Jamming Devices

Present Situation

Chapter 934, F.S., governs the security of electronic and telephonic communications. Although most provisions in the chapter relate to law enforcement officers' and communication professionals' actions and limitations, some apply just as well to average citizens. One such provision is s. 934.03(4), F.S., which contains criminal offenses and corresponding penalties for intercepting another's oral communication unless the chapter contains an exception.[122]

Section 934.04, F.S., prohibits the manufacture, distribution, or possession of wire, oral, or electronic communication intercepting devices. Violation of this section is a third-degree felony.

[122] The prohibition located in s. 934.03(1), F.S., against intentionally intercepting, endeavoring to intercept, or procuring any other person to intercept or endeavor to intercept any wire, oral, or electronic communication, is punishable as a third-degree felony. Section 934.03(4), F.S. A third-degree felony is punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment and a $5,000 fine. Sections 775.082 and 775.083, F.S. Note that s. 934.41, F.S., contains an alternative fine under limited circumstances.

Section 843.165, F.S., prohibits knowingly transmitting jamming devices or jamming transmissions over radio frequencies assigned by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to a state, county, or municipal governmental agency or water management district, or jamming radio transmissions made by volunteer communications personnel of such agencies or any public or private emergency medical services provider, unless authorized to do so. Violation of this section is a first-degree misdemeanor.

At the federal level, the FCC regulates the use of signal jamming devices. U.S. code 47, section 302a grants the FCC the authority to regulate radio frequency interference.[123] It prohibits the use, manufacture, import, sale, or shipment of devices that can interfere with radio communications, except as authorized. It does not, however, explicitly prohibit "possession" of such devices.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 52 amends s. 934.02, F.S., to add the definition of "signal jamming device" to mean a device or process designed to intentionally interfere with radio communications, police radar, or global positioning systems.

Section 53 creates s. 934.51, F.S., to prohibit the possession, use, manufacture, import, sale, holding for sale, or distribution of signal jamming devices, with the exception of federal or military law enforcement when used lawfully as part of a criminal investigation, or any person authorized by the FCC. Violation of this section constitutes a first-degree misdemeanor.

Section 61 provides that the bill shall take effect July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

Sections 1 and 4 prohibit local governments from enacting or enforcing ordinances related to gasoline-powered agriculture and landscape equipment.

Section 14 requires a permittee of a biosolids land application site to ensure that only Class AA biosolids are applied to the soil by July 1, 2028 or July 1, 2031, depending on the circumstances.

Section 29 prohibits a local government from requiring an agricultural property owner to obtain a rural event venue permit or license.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

[123] 47 U.S.C. § 302a.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The bill could result in more biosolids to be converted to Class AA biosolids and would prohibit the current practice of land application of Classes A and B biosolids. Private treatment facilities may incur significant costs to convert to Class AA biosolids treatment. Private entities may also incur significant costs due to needing to find alternative disposal methods for waste products before sufficient capacity for conversion to Class AA biosolids has been achieved within the required timeframe.

Pest control companies offering fumigations may incur additional costs in the form of higher insurance policy premiums to meet the increased insurance coverage requirements in the bill.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The department may incur administrative costs in order to implement the bill. Additionally:

- The bill may restrict counties and municipalities from imposing fines or fees for the use of gasoline-powered farm equipment or gasoline-powered landscape equipment on farms. The fiscal impact on county and municipal governments is indeterminate, but likely to be insignificant.
- The bill requires all proceeds from the sale of state-owned conservation lands deemed suitable for bona fide agriculture and surplused by DEP to be deposited into the Incidental Trust Fund within the department. This may represent a positive fiscal impact to the department and a negative fiscal impact to the source of the funds used originally to acquire the land.
- The state will no longer be required to spend $45,000 annually to be a member of the Southern States Energy Compact.
- There is likely a significant negative fiscal impact to local governments to meet the requirements of the new provisions relating to biosolids. Public treatment facilities may incur significant costs to convert to Class AA biosolids treatment. Public entities may also incur significant costs due to needing to find alternative disposal methods for waste products before sufficient capacity for conversion to Class AA biosolids has been achieved within the required timeframe. There may be a long-term positive

fiscal impact as a result of reduced cleanup costs and reduced damage to the natural systems associated with more rigorous land application requirements.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

Ecologically Significant Parcels in Low-Density Municipalities

The changes made to section 163.3202, F.S., refer to both a developer and an applicant, while it is unclear if these are the same or different entities. Additionally, "family member" is not defined and could result in an interpretation that is inconsistent with the intent of the law.

Surplus of State-Owned Lands

The bill may conflict with s. 253.0341(13), F.S., which requires that proceeds from the sale of surplus conservation lands purchased on or after July 1, 2015, shall be deposited into the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, except when such lands were purchased with funds other than those from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund or a land acquisition trust fund created to implement s. 28, Art. X of the State Constitution, the proceeds shall be deposited into the fund from which the lands were purchased.

Payments to Subcontractors

The bill does not specify whether the required 45-day payment timeline refers to business days or calendar days.

Biosolids Management

The changes made to the management of biosolids would benefit from further clarification, including providing certain definitions, the consideration of whether DEP rules should be codified, and the specification of whether the new regulations apply to new or renewed permits after the effective date of the bill.

Food Animal Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program

The bill does not specify the types of loans that can be offset, except "for studies leading up to a veterinary degree with a specialization in food animal veterinary medicine." The bill authorizes the program for up to three new eligible candidates annually but does not provide application or selection requirements.

Citrus Marketing Order Advisory Council

The bill specifies that the board of directors of CRAFT will serve without compensation, but s. 573.112(6), F.S., already specifies that no members or alternate members of marketing order advisory councils may receive a salary, rendering this provision of the bill unnecessary.

Public Fair Charter and Permitting Process Modernization

It is unclear whether Section 42 allows new associations to be formed in counties where any associations currently exist.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 163.3202, 253.0341, 259.1053, 287.1351, 288.1175, 322.12, 322.36, 403.0855, 482.071, 489.105, 500.04, 500.93, 501.013, 570.07, 570.822, 570.85, 570.86, 573.112, 581.031, 583.01, 590.02, 597.004, 597.010, 599.012, 601.13, 616.01, 616.02, 616.03, 616.05, 616.051, 616.07, 616.001, 616.101, 616.15, 616.251, 624.4032, 843.085, and 934.02.

This bill creates the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 125.489,166.036, 489.1295, 501.062, 570.832, 570.846, 595.421, and 934.51.

This bill repeals the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 377.12, 377.71, 377.711, and 500.81.

This bill reenacts the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 212.08, 287.056, 287.138, 500.177, and 616.185.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS/CS/CS by Rules on February 10, 2026:
The CS/CS/CS makes the following changes to the bill:

- Changes the title of the statute created by Section 19 of the bill from "Theft of subcontractor or supplier services" to "Prohibition against nonpayment." It changes the required timeframe for paying subcontractors and suppliers from 30 days to 45 days or in accordance with the applicable contract, and changes the exception for the payment requirement from "reasonable cause" to a "bona fide dispute" over the amount due. It reduces the penalty for nonpayment from a first-degree misdemeanor for amounts under $20,000 or third-degree felony for amounts $20,000 or greater to disciplinary action under s. 489.129, F.S., which includes penalties such as revoking registration, requiring financial restitution, and imposing fines;
- Provides that local governments that do not transport biosolids for land application outside of their respective county boundaries do not have to comply with the requirements of paragraph (3)(a), which requires a permittee of a biosolids land application site to ensure that only class AA biosolids are applied to the soil, until July 1, 2031. It also provides that this paragraph may not be construed to prohibit the transportation of Class B biosolids by a local government outside of its boundaries to a Class AA biosolids treatment facility or waste-to-energy facility;
- Adds equine animals and retitles the Florida Food Animal and Equine Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program; clarifies that the annual $25,000 veterinary loan

principal repayment limit and the 5 year repayment limit are for each new eligible candidate;
- Merges the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc., of the University of Florida into the Citrus Research and Field Trial Foundation, Inc., of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and designates the latter foundation as the advisory council and research body for a citrus research marketing order. It also specifies required board of directors membership of the latter foundation;
- Removes the "women's department" and "Future Homemakers of America" and adds the "Family, Career and Community Leaders of America" to the list of possible exhibitors for which annual public fair permit applicants must disclose their premium list;
- Corrects the definition in statute of a nonprofit agricultural organization, changing it from an organization exempt from federal income tax under s. 501(c)(3) to one exempt under s. 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code, in reference to agricultural organizations being allowed to offer medical benefit options to their members; and
- Removes the section of the bill regarding the disparagement of agricultural food products.

CS/CS by Fiscal Policy on January 14, 2026:
The CS/CS makes the following changes to the bill:
- Prohibits municipalities from approving a development on an ecologically significant parcel in a low-density municipality unless the developer attests that the development will not exceed 1 residential unit per 20 acres or unless the applicant attests that the residential units being constructed will be used for the express purpose of providing housing for the family members of the applicant. The commission or council of a low-density municipality may waive these density requirements by a unanimous vote;
- Delays the effective date to July 1, 2028 for the date that biosolids land application site permits must comply with the bill;
- Requires people applying for pest control business licenses or renewals who will offer fumigations as part of their operations to submit to the department a certificate of insurance covering $1,000,000 per person/$2,000,000 per occurrence of bodily injury, $1,000,000 per occurrence/$2,000,000 in the aggregate of property damage, or combined single-limit coverage of $2,000,000 in the aggregate;
- Changes the fine that the department may impose for a violation of the Structural Pest Control Act from the Class II category to the Class III category, which increases the fine limit from $5,000 to $10,000. The amendment similarly changes the civil penalty for which the department may institute a civil suit from the Class II to the Class III category for any violation for which the department may issue a notice to cease and desist for the practice of pest control without a license from the department;
- Increases the time limit from 15 days to 30 days in which a contractor must compensate their subcontractors or suppliers after receiving payment for the services performed by the subcontractor or supplier;
- Prohibits a local government from requiring an agricultural property owner to obtain a rural event venue permit or license;
- Names the Bonifay Forestry Station the John Michael Mathis Forestry Station; and

- Exempts the Florida State Fair Authority from the requirements of part I of the chapter, rather than from part I as a whole, which sets requirements for public fair associations.

CS by Agriculture on December 2, 2025:
The CS clarifies that the changes made to s. 253.0341, F.S., apply to lands determined to be suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes on or after January 1, 2024, and not that the subsection is retroactive to that date. The CS also creates the Florida Native Seed Research and Marketing Program.

B. Amendments:

None.