

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019

H.B. 970  
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10558-MCf-131A

Short Title: Enhance Ag Tax Benefits for Beginning Farmers. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Queen, Corbin, Ager, and B. Turner (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO INCENTIVIZE BEGINNING FARMING OPERATIONS BY BROADENING  
3 WHICH AGRICULTURAL LANDS QUALIFY FOR THE PRESENT-USE VALUE  
4 PROPERTY TAX BENEFIT.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 SECTION 1. G.S. 105-277.3 reads as rewritten:

7 "§ 105-277.3. **Agricultural, horticultural, and forestland – Classifications.**

8 (a) Classes Defined. – The following classes of property are designated special classes  
9 of property under authority of Section 2(2) of Article V of the North Carolina Constitution and  
10 must be appraised, assessed, and taxed as provided in G.S. 105-277.2 through G.S. 105-277.7.

11 (1) Agricultural land. – Individually owned agricultural land consisting of one or  
12 more tracts, one of which satisfies the requirements of this subdivision. For  
13 agricultural land used as a farm for aquatic species, as defined in  
14 G.S. 106-758, the tract must meet the income requirement for agricultural land  
15 and must consist of at least five acres in actual production or produce at least  
16 20,000 pounds of aquatic species for commercial sale annually, regardless of  
17 acreage. For all other agricultural land, the tract must meet the income  
18 requirement for agricultural land in subsection (a1) of this section and must  
19 consist of at least 10 acres that are in actual production. Land in actual  
20 production includes land under improvements used in the commercial  
21 production or growing of crops, plants, or animals.

22 ~~To meet the income requirement, agricultural land must, for the three years~~  
23 ~~preceding January 1 of the year for which the benefit of this section is claimed,~~  
24 ~~have produced an average gross income of at least one thousand dollars~~  
25 ~~(\$1,000). Gross income includes income from the sale of the agricultural~~  
26 ~~products produced from the land, grazing fees for livestock, the sale of bees~~  
27 ~~or products derived from beehives other than honey, any payments received~~  
28 ~~under a governmental soil conservation or land retirement program, and the~~  
29 ~~amount paid to the taxpayer during the taxable year pursuant to P.L. 108-357,~~  
30 ~~Title VI, Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform Act of 2004.~~

31 (2) Horticultural land. – Individually owned horticultural land consisting of one  
32 or more tracts, one of which consists of at least five acres that are in actual  
33 production and that, for the three years preceding January 1 of the year for  
34 which the benefit of this section is claimed, have met the applicable minimum  
35 gross income requirement that meet the income requirement in subsection  
36 (a1) of this section. Land in actual production includes land under



1 improvements used in the commercial production or growing of fruits or  
2 vegetables or nursery or floral products. Land that has been used to produce  
3 evergreens intended for use as Christmas trees must have met the minimum  
4 gross income requirements established by the Department of Revenue for the  
5 land. ~~All other horticultural land must have produced an average gross income  
6 of at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000). Gross income includes income from  
7 the sale of the horticultural products produced from the land and any payments  
8 received under a governmental soil conservation or land retirement program.~~

9 ...

10 (a1) Income Requirements. – For a new application to qualify agricultural or horticultural  
11 land for present-use value assessment or for any review of the property's qualification for  
12 present-use value assessment that occurs before the property has been assessed at present-use  
13 value for three years, the property owner must show that the property either (i) for the year  
14 preceding January 1 of the year for which the benefit of this section is claimed, produced a gross  
15 income of at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or (ii) for the three years preceding January 1 of  
16 the year for which the benefit of this section is claimed, produced an average gross income of at  
17 least one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

18 For any review of the eligibility of agricultural or horticultural land for present-use value  
19 assessment under G.S. 105-296(j) that occurs after such land has been taxed at its present-use  
20 value for three years, in order to meet the income requirement, the property owner must show  
21 that, for the three years preceding such review, the property has produced an average gross  
22 income of at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

23 Gross income includes income from the sale of the agricultural or horticultural products  
24 produced from the land, grazing fees for livestock, the sale of bees or products derived from  
25 beehives other than honey, any payments received under a governmental soil conservation or  
26 land retirement program, and the amount paid to the taxpayer during the taxable year pursuant to  
27 P.L. 108-357, Title VI, Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform Act of 2004.

28 (b) Individual Ownership Requirements. – In order to come within a classification  
29 described in subsection (a) of this section, land owned by an individual must also satisfy one of  
30 the following conditions:

- 31 (1) It is the owner's place of residence.
- 32 (2) It has been owned by the current owner or a relative of the current owner for  
33 the ~~four years~~ year preceding January 1 of the year for which the benefit of  
34 this section is claimed.
- 35 (3) At the time of transfer to the current owner, it qualified for classification in  
36 the hands of a business entity or trust that transferred the land to the current  
37 owner who was a member of the business entity or a beneficiary of the trust,  
38 as appropriate.

39 (b1) Entity Ownership Requirements. – In order to come within a classification described  
40 in subsection (a) of this section, land owned by a business entity must meet the requirements of  
41 subdivision (1) of this subsection and land owned by a trust must meet the requirements of  
42 subdivision (2) of this subsection.

- 43 (1) Land owned by a business entity must have been owned by one or more of the  
44 following for the ~~four years~~ year immediately preceding January 1 of the year  
45 for which the benefit of this section is claimed:
  - 46 a. The business entity.
  - 47 b. A member of the business entity.
  - 48 c. Another business entity whose members include a member of the  
49 business entity that currently owns the land.

1                   (2)     Land owned by a trust must have been owned by the trust or by one or more  
2                             of its creators for the ~~four years-year~~ immediately preceding January 1 of the  
3                             year for which the benefit of this section is claimed.

4                   ...."

5                   **SECTION 2.** This act is effective for taxes imposed for taxable years beginning on  
6                   or after July 1, 2019.