

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL DRS15453-MHa-128

Short Title: Supporting Small Farmers for NC's Future Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Smith (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO SUPPORT SMALL FARMERS IN NORTH CAROLINA BY PROVIDING
3 GRANT FUNDING TO ENSURE THE FUTURE VIABILITY OF NORTH CAROLINA'S
4 FAMILY FARMS.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 SECTION 1. Findings and Purpose. – The General Assembly finds that decades of
7 barriers to entry, rising land prices, and economic consolidation have led to the loss of millions
8 of acres of land farmed by small farmers. The General Assembly further finds that financial
9 assistance through targeted grants can help address disparities and contribute to the long-term
10 success of small farmers. The purpose of this act is to support the viability and sustainability of
11 small farmers in North Carolina by providing financial assistance to support these farmers.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 106 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
13 Article to read:

14 "Article 61B.

15 "Small Farmers Support Grant Program.

16 "§ 106-748. Definitions.

17 The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 18 (1) Commissioner. – The Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
19 (2) Department. – The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer
20 Services.
21 (3) Eligible individual. – A resident of this State who meets all of the following
22 criteria:
23 a. Is at least 21 years of age.
24 b. Is a small farmer.
25 c. Had an annual income from farming operations for the preceding
26 taxable year of at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more.
27 (4) Small farmer. – A farmer with a gross cash farm income of one million dollars
28 (\$1,000,000) or less, as determined in a manner as the Department may
29 specify.

30 "§ 106-749. Small Farmers Support Grant Program established.

31 (a) Program Established. – The Small Farmers Support Grant Program (Program) is
32 established within the North Carolina Department of Agriculture to support current small farmers
33 and to encourage the continued financial viability of those farmers in the field of agriculture. The
34 Small Farmer Grant Fund (Fund) is established as a special revenue fund. The Fund shall consist
35 of gifts, grants, and donations from non-State entities and General Fund appropriations for the
36 support of the Program established by this Article. The Fund shall be used for the provision of



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1 grants to eligible individuals for essential inputs, equipment, and operational improvements to
2 their farming operations.

3 (b) Grants. – Grants from the Fund are subject to the following procedures and
4 restrictions:

5 (1) An eligible individual seeking a grant shall submit an application on a form
6 and in a manner approved by the Commissioner.

7 (2) The Commissioner may establish priorities for grants among all eligible
8 individuals based on criteria that include farm size, income levels, and
9 economic hardship, including lack of access to capital and operational
10 support.

11 (3) The Commissioner may establish tiered maximum grant amounts based on
12 financial hardship, demonstrated need, and other criteria the Department feels
13 will maximize the ability of the Program to increase the long-term viability
14 and sustainability of small farmers.

15 (4) The Commissioner may retain up to one percent (1%) of funds appropriated
16 to the Fund for administrative costs related to administering the Program.

17 (c) The Department shall establish an advisory committee to monitor the Program's
18 effectiveness and make recommendations for improvements.

19 (d) The Department shall adopt rules to carry out the provisions of this Article."

20 **SECTION 3.** Funding. – The sum of fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) in
21 recurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is appropriated from the General Fund to the
22 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the Small Farmer Grant Fund established
23 in G.S. 106-749, as enacted by Section 2 of this act, to be used for the Small Farmers Support
24 Grant Program.

25 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2026.