

## HB523 INTRODUCED



1 HB523  
2 U9V67XG-1  
3 By Representatives Jackson, Lawrence, Warren, Hall, Travis,  
4 Daniels, Lands, McCampbell  
5 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund  
6 First Read: 26-Feb-26



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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would authorize the Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries to establish the Alabama Agricultural Enhancement Program to provide cost share funds to agricultural producers to make investments in certain agriculture sectors in their businesses.

This bill would require the commissioner to provide a report to the Governor and Legislature detailing progress and needs in establishing the program.

This bill would establish the Alabama Agricultural Enhancement Advisory Board to advise the commissioner on the program.

This bill would establish certain agriculture sectors to be included in the program for which funds may be awarded and establish criteria for applicants to be eligible to receive these funds.

This bill would create the Alabama Agricultural Enhancement Fund in the State Treasury to be used by the commissioner to administer the program.

This bill would also authorize the Department of Agriculture and Industries to adopt rules to administer the program.



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29 A BILL  
30 TO BE ENTITLED  
31 AN ACT

32  
33 Relating to agriculture investment; to authorize the  
34 Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries to establish the  
35 Alabama Agricultural Enhancement Program to provide funds to  
36 agricultural producers for certain agriculture sectors; to  
37 require the commissioner to report on the program's progress  
38 and needs and establish agriculture sectors for investment and  
39 eligibility criteria for applicants; to create the Alabama  
40 Agricultural Enhancement Advisory Board to advise on the  
41 program; to create the Alabama Agricultural Enhancement Fund  
42 from which the commissioner shall administer the program; and  
43 to authorize the Department of Agriculture and Industries to  
44 adopt rules to administer the program.

45 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

46 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as  
47 the Alabama Agricultural Enhancement Program Act.

48 Section 2. For the purposes of this act, the following  
49 terms have the following meanings:

50 (1) BOARD. The Alabama Agricultural Enhancement  
51 Advisory Board.

52 (2) COMMISSIONER. The Commissioner of Agriculture and  
53 Industries.

54 (3) PROGRAM. The Alabama Agricultural Enhancement  
55 Program.

56 Section 3. (a) The Commissioner of Agriculture and



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57 Industries may establish the Alabama Agricultural Enhancement  
58 Program to provide cost share funds to agricultural producers  
59 to make long-term investments in farms and rural communities.

60 (b) Not later than September 30, 2027, the commissioner  
61 shall deliver a report to the Governor, the President Pro  
62 Tempore of the Senate, the Senate Minority Leader, the Speaker  
63 of the House of Representatives, and the House Minority Leader  
64 detailing the progress made toward establishing the program  
65 and any operational or financial needs, including, but not  
66 limited to, any legislative action, appropriation, or other  
67 resource necessary to establish and implement the program.

68 Section 4. The Alabama Agricultural Enhancement  
69 Advisory Board is established to advise and provide  
70 recommendations to the commissioner regarding the program. The  
71 advisory board shall consist of the following members:

72 (1) The Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, or  
73 his or her designee, who shall serve as chair.

74 (2) The Dean of the Auburn University College of  
75 Agriculture, or his or her designee.

76 (3) The Dean of the Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical  
77 University College of Agricultural, Life, and Natural  
78 Sciences, or his or her designee.

79 (4) The Dean of the Tuskegee University College of  
80 Agriculture, Environment, and Nutrition Sciences, or his or  
81 her designee.

82 (5) The Chair of the State Soil and Water Conservation  
83 Committee, or his or her designee.

84 Section 5. (a) The commissioner, with input from the



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85 board, shall identify agriculture sectors for which the  
86 program shall provide funds, and may periodically modify these  
87 sectors to best meet the needs of the state's farms and rural  
88 communities. The agriculture sectors for investment shall  
89 include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

- 90 (1) Dairy.
- 91 (2) Genetics.
- 92 (3) Hay Storage.
- 93 (4) Herd health.
- 94 (5) Livestock equipment.
- 95 (6) Livestock solutions.
- 96 (7) Aquaculture.
- 97 (8) Poultry growers.
- 98 (9) Row crop solutions.
- 99 (10) Swine producers.
- 100 (11) Working structures and fence-line systems.
- 101 (12) Agritourism.
- 102 (13) Producer diversification.

103 (b) The commissioner, in consultation with the board,  
104 shall identify and may periodically modify the equipment and  
105 structures that are eligible for purchase with program funds.

106 (c) The commissioner shall adopt reasonable criteria  
107 that an applicant shall satisfy to be eligible to receive  
108 program funds, including requiring an applicant to:

- 109 (1) Complete an educational program or certification  
110 demonstrating substantial knowledge in the agriculture sector  
111 for which the applicant seeks funds;
- 112 (2) Provide taxpayer identification information;



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113 (3) Provide proof of residency in the state;

114 (4) Clearly state the intended purpose of the purchased  
115 equipment or structure;

116 (5) Attest that the applicant shall use the equipment  
117 or structure purchased using program funds for the equipment's  
118 or structure's intended purpose for not less than five years  
119 following purchase; and

120 (6) Grant the Department of Agriculture and Industries  
121 permission to inspect any equipment or structure purchased  
122 using program funds to verify compliance with subdivision (5).

123 (d) Any person who knowingly provides a false or  
124 misleading statement or information to the Department of  
125 Agriculture and Industries in applying for funds pursuant to  
126 this act may not receive any funds from or otherwise  
127 participate in the program.

128 Section 6.(a) The Alabama Agricultural Enhancement Fund  
129 is established in the State Treasury from which the  
130 commissioner shall administer the program. The fund shall  
131 consist of any monies appropriated by the Legislature and any  
132 voluntary contributions, gifts, and grants.

133 (b) Monies deposited into the fund shall be disbursed  
134 only upon warrants of the Comptroller drawn upon the State  
135 Treasury on itemized vouchers approved by the commissioner. No  
136 monies shall be withdrawn or expended except as budgeted and  
137 allocated according to Article 4 of Chapter 4 and Chapter 19  
138 of Title 41, Code of Alabama 1975, and only in amounts as  
139 stipulated in the general appropriations act, other  
140 appropriations acts, or this section. At the end of each



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141 fiscal year, any unencumbered balance shall not revert to the  
142 State General Fund under Section 41-4-93, Code of Alabama  
143 1975.

144 Section 7. The Department of Agriculture and Industries  
145 may adopt rules to administer this act.

146 Section 8. This act shall become effective on February  
147 1, 2027.