

GROWTH THROUGH AGRICULTURE ACT

LEGISLATOR NOTICE

The Legislative Services Division is required to offer a brief history on the subject matter of a bill draft request prior to drafting (5-4-105, MCA; [Chapter 309, Laws of 2017](#)). The history must include related legislation introduced over the last five sessions and hyperlinks to the bill, hearing information, and fiscal notes. The legislation links below open to the page showing the status and history of bills introduced on this topic in the past. The bill text and any related fiscal notes can be accessed through the link at the top of that page.

Legislation can be complex, and this history is not intended to be exhaustive. Please contact the drafter of the requested bill for more information.

Background Materials and Research

Topic Summary: The 1987 Montana Legislature created the Montana Growth Through Agriculture Act with a purpose

to strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry by establishing a public-private sector partnership to assist the development of innovative agricultural business organizational improvements and the commercialization and marketing of new agricultural products in order to keep pace with a transforming agricultural industry and to create new jobs and expand small business opportunities.¹

In practice, this support takes the form of grants and loans administered by the Department of Agriculture.² A seven-member, governor-appointed Montana Agricultural Development Council establishes policies and awards grants and loans. In 2018, for example, the council awarded funding and assistance for grain bin equipment, breweries, hydroponics, and the production of baked goods, cider, cricket cookies, fermented foods, goat's milk soap, hops, ice cream, malted grain, wool socks, and yoghurt.

The program also works on developing foreign markets. Under the act, the council and department are involved with the Japan trade office and trade missions to other countries.

¹ Ch. 665 Laws. Mont. 1987.

² Recipients must match the amount of assistance.

Legislative Services Division Materials:

Economic Affairs Interim Committee, [Department of Agriculture agency overview](#) (2017).

Economic Affairs Interim Committee, *Food for Thought: Value-added Agricultural Production and Buying Locally, A Final Report on the Senate Joint Resolution 13 Study of Value-Added Agricultural Production* (2010).

Legal Services Office, [Legal opinion regarding growth through agriculture program](#) (2012).

Legal Services Office, [Legal opinion on use of grants through the Montana Growth Through Agriculture Act](#) (2000).

Other Materials:

Montana Department of Agriculture, Growth Through Agriculture webpage: agr.mt.gov/Growth-Through-Agriculture

Introduced Legislation

2019: House Bill 431—Chapter number assigned. AN ACT CREATING THE MONTANA FARMER LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY REVISING THE MONTANA GROWTH THROUGH AGRICULTURE ACT; PROVIDING THAT INTEREST INCOME FROM COAL SEVERANCE TAX FUNDS FUNDS CERTAIN GROWTH THROUGH AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS; ALLOWING THE MONTANA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE FARMER LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; CREATING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS; REQUIRING DOCUMENTATION FOR APPLICANTS; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING FOR PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING OF PROGRAM APPLICANTS; REVISING A STATUTORY APPROPRIATION; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY TO MONTANA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

2017: House Bill 631—(S) Died in process. AN ACT REVISING THE MONTANA GROWTH THROUGH AGRICULTURE ACT BY CREATING THE MONTANA FARMER LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; REQUIRING THE MONTANA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; PROVIDING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS; REQUIRING CERTAIN DOCUMENTATION FROM APPLICANTS; PROVIDING PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA FOR FUNDING; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION.

2015: None.

2013: None.

2011: None

2009: HB48—Chapter number assigned. AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATING TO THE GROWTH THROUGH AGRICULTURE ACT; REVISING ELIGIBILITY AND DISBURSEMENT GUIDELINES; ALLOWING THE USE OF GRANTS; GRANTING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AMENDING SECTIONS.

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