

HOUSE No. 4289

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, January 29, 2024.

The committee on Agriculture to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 91) of Mindy Domb and others for legislation to establish a separate fund to be known as the agriculture and fishery vulnerability preparedness grant fund to address the impact of climate change on farms and fisheries, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4289) ought to pass.

For the committee,

PAUL A. SCHMID, III.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act addressing the impact of climate change on farms and fisheries.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following
2 section:-

3 Section 2BBBBBB. Agriculture and Fishery Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Fund

4 (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate
5 fund to be known as the Agriculture and Fishery Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Fund. The
6 fund shall be administered by the secretary of energy and environmental affairs, in consultation
7 with the commissioner of the department of agricultural resources and the commissioner of the
8 department of fish and game. The fund shall be credited with: (i) revenue from appropriations or
9 other money authorized by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the
10 fund; (ii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iii) funds from public and private sources such
11 as gifts, grants and donations. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be subject to further
12 appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to
13 the General Fund; provided, however, that such contributions shall not be further restricted by the

14 donor or used by the commonwealth for any other purpose. Any bond proceeds deposited into
15 the fund shall be kept separate from any and all other funds deposited into the fund.

16 (b) The public purpose of this fund shall be to administer the agriculture and fishery
17 vulnerability preparedness grant program to support farms and fisheries in Massachusetts to
18 begin the process of planning for climate change adaptation and resiliency and implementing
19 priority projects. In furtherance of this public purpose, the secretary, in consultation with the
20 departments, shall administer the fund as grants to farms and fisheries to support controlled
21 climate growing, energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate resilient management practices,
22 nature-based solutions to climate impacts, infrastructure needs to support climate resilience,
23 development and implementation of data collection and monitoring to measure the impact of
24 these investments, and other eligible purposes as determined by the secretary and the
25 commissioners. Program funds shall be awarded to applicants from each eligible sector
26 proportionate to the amount of funds requested by applicants in each eligible sector. Technical
27 assistance with application submission and program implementation shall be offered to
28 applicants and awardees respectively.

29 (c) The secretary shall promulgate rules and regulations for the administration and
30 implementation of subsections (a) and (b). The secretary shall file any policies, rules and
31 regulations with the joint committee on agriculture for review and comment at least 30 days
32 before the effective date of the policies, rules or regulations.

33 (d) The secretary shall file a quarterly report with the house and senate committees on
34 ways and means, the joint committee on agriculture, and the clerks of the house and the senate
35 on the following: (i) a list of grant applicants and the counties in which they are located, (ii) list

36 of grant recipients and the counties in which they are located, (iii) the amount of funds requested
37 by applicants, (iv) the associated grant amounts, (v) the applicant's sector as categorized by farm
38 or fishery, (vi) an annual statement detailing the sources and uses of funds, (vii) a forecast of
39 future payments based on current binding obligations, and (viii) a detailed breakdown of the
40 purposes and amounts of administrative costs charged to the fund.

41 SECTION 2. Section 1 shall take effect immediately upon the passage of this act.