

## Joint Committee on Agriculture

### Bill Summary

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**Bill Number:** H.135

**Title:** An Act protecting the viability of farms in the Commonwealth

**Sponsors:** Representative Ouellette of Westport

**Hearing Date:** Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 10:30 AM - 01:00 PM, B-2

**Reporting Date:** Saturday, July 12, 2025

**Similar Matters:** None

#### **Prior History:**

2023-2024: Filed as H.98; Referred to the Joint Committee on Agriculture; Redraft accompanied H.4290; Reported favorably to House Ways and Means

2021-2022: Filed as H.1006; Reported to study by the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture

2019-2020: Filed as H.867; Reported to study by the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture

2017-2018: Filed as H.2939; Reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture; Referred to House Ways and Means where no further action was taken

2013-2014: Filed as H.798; Reported to study by the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture

#### **CURRENT LAW:**

Chapter 30A Massachusetts General Laws governs laws relating to state officers and state administrative procedures.

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires that before any state and regional agencies, boards and or commissions propose any rule, regulation, or regulatory requirement that will potentially have an adverse impact on agriculture, it must be made public that the rule or regulation may have an adverse impact on agriculture in the Commonwealth. If the proposal would have a potential impact on agriculture, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and the other responsible party will conduct an impact assessment to determine the extent of the impact, including environmental and economic impacts.

If any select boards, boards of selectmen, town councils and city councils propose any rules, laws, or ordinances that may have an adverse impact on agriculture, that council or board must complete a form prescribed by MDAR and it must be made public. Only emergency rules, laws, or ordinances can take effect without the compliance of this process.

If the impact assessment reveals that a proposal will result in the loss of agricultural or horticultural lands or \$500 per year and/or 20 hours per year in labor costs, a copy of the findings will be submitted to the Board of Agriculture for suggestions to mitigate such costs.