

Joint Committee on Agriculture

Bill Summary

Bill Number: H.142

Title: An Act establishing healthy soil performance guidelines

Sponsors: Representative Vieira of Falmouth

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

Reporting Date: Saturday, July 12, 2025

Similar Matters: H.142 (Representative Giannino - Identical)
S.65 (Senator Mark - Similar)

Prior History:

New file; No prior history

CURRENT LAW:

Chapter 128 of the Massachusetts General Laws relates to agriculture.

Section 64 of Chapter 128 of the Massachusetts General Laws contains the definitions of terms as they are used in sections 65 to 83 of this chapter. This includes the definitions of terms related to soil additives and lawns.

SUMMARY:

This bill amends Section 64 of Chapter 128 by striking the definition of “lawn” and inserting new definitions for “Functional Turf”, “Utility Turf”, and “Turf”. This bill directs the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to promulgate regulations for post-construction soil performance guidelines that must include soil depth and quality, carbon storage capacity, storm water run off, water quality, fertilizer, and nutrient input mitigation, and compaction or infiltration capacity. MDAR will work in conjunction with UMass Extension to ensure that the regulations fall in line with the goals of the healthy soils program. Regulations will be consistent with healthy soils practices defined in section 7A of Chapter 128. MDAR may establish fines for violations of these regulations not to exceed \$250 for a first offense, \$500 for a second offense, and \$1,000 for a third offense.