



AGENDA
HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Monday March 17 2025

10:30 a.m.

515 Irvis Office Building

- Call to Order
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Attendance Roll Call
- Legislation
 - **HB764 Burgos**-Creates the Fresh Food Financing Initiative stimulating growth of health food retail options in low-income and moderate-income communities
 - **HB861 Pashinski/Moul**-Extends the June 30, 2025 sunset date for 3 years to maintain the status quo on how racehorse medication testing is paid.
 - **A00102 Moul** Changes the effective date to immediately
 - **HB608 Isaacson**—VOTE TO REREFER—Title 18-Animal Cruelty- Ear Cropping of dogs
 - **HB587 Friel**-Establishes a certification requirement for haulers and brokers of food processing residuals
- Adjourn

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No:	HB0764 PN0788	Prepared By:	Destiny Zeiders (717) 783-0686
Committee:	Agriculture & Rural Affairs	Executive Director:	Destiny Zeiders
Sponsor:	Burgos, Danilo		
Date:	3/3/2025		

A. Brief Concept

Establishes the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI) to increase access to healthy, affordable grocery food options and to improve economic opportunities for underserved communities in urban, rural, and suburban areas across the state.

C. Analysis of the Bill

HB764 establishes the Fresh Food Financing Initiative in Title 3 (Agriculture) designed to increase the availability of fresh and nutritious food, that will stimulate capital, job creation and economic vitality and construction, rehabilitation or expansion of grocery stores, farmers' markets or retail food establishments in underserved and low-income or moderate-income communities in this Commonwealth.

The program shall be administered and developed by the Department of Agriculture and may collaborate with the Department of Community and Economic Development to promote local agricultural products by placing priority on projects producing, aggregating, sourcing or selling Pennsylvania agricultural commodities, including the department's Pennsylvania Preferred® program, that:

- Located in, owned by or primarily serve BIPOC communities. Eligibility be determined by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania's municipal data;
- Promote supplier diversity and increase business opportunities for businesses recognized by the Department of General Services as verified as a small diverse business or a small veteran business; or
- Located in or serve a USDA-designated food desert.

For regional anchor supermarket projects, those with matching funds shall be prioritized.

The department shall make grants available in three separate classes including regional anchor supermarkets, grocery stores, retail food establishments.

Matching Funds

Grants in an amount are not to exceed 15% of the funding for any of the project classes and grants for capital projects must be matched by private money in an amount equal to the State grant. No more than 10% of the funding may be reserved for administrative and operational costs to manage the program.

Grant fund eligibility

A for-profit, nonprofit or cooperative entity meeting the criteria shall be eligible to apply providing:

- The primary business, measured as being greater than or equal to 50% of the entity's previous year's annual revenue, is from the sale of staple and perishable food to consumers or direct to retail settings.
- Operates and provides service in this Commonwealth.
- Serves customers that live in a low-income or moderate-income community.

- Provides access to affordable, high- quality fresh produce, meat and dairy products and other grocery items for low-to-moderate income shoppers.
- Eligible projects are supported by the community as determined by the department using maps, data tools and other forms of market research.

Eligible Grant Use Funding

- Equipment purchases that improve the availability and quality of fresh produce, meat and dairy products and other grocery items.
- Innovative food access technology that assists an existing or new grocery store.
- Innovative food access technology that assists the food access efforts of a retail food establishment.
- Innovative food access technology or delivery of food to retail that assists the food access efforts of an eligible applicant.

The department shall establish the grant program standards and administer grants to eligible applicants. Grant program standards and requirements must do the following:

- Establish eligibility standards for applicants.
- Describe the objectives of the grant program, which shall be consistent with this chapter.
- Establish caps, limits and restrictions with respect to grant amounts.
- Establish an application process and timetable.
- Present the criteria under which grant applications shall be evaluated by the department.
- Establish a timetable within which the department shall award or disapprove a completed grant application.
- Establish procedures by which the department shall verify expenditures of grant money by a grant recipient.

Grants may only be awarded to the extent money is appropriated by the General Assembly and the secretary may approve a grant in less than a requested amount and impose restrictions or special conditions upon the issuance of a grant.

The department may require a written agreement describing the terms and conditions of the grant and establish criteria under which the secretary may demand the return of all or a portion of the grant money.

The Fresh Food Financing Initiative Restricted Account is established in the General Fund and shall be used exclusively for the program. In addition to State money appropriated to the department for the program, the department may also accept gifts, donations, legacies and other revenues, including Federal appropriations.

Effective Date:

60 DAYS.

G. Relevant Existing Laws

In 2020-21 HB2387, the General Appropriations 5/12ths budget bill, allocated \$10 million from money appropriated to DCED for COVID Relief to fund the Food Access Initiative. This money was earmarked by Congressman Dwight Evans for Pennsylvania to provide funds to re-start the FFFI program.

Existing law:

The Charitable Food Program (CFP): annually allocates \$3,000,000 in tax credits to 10 charitable food providers, like food banks, through the Neighborhood Assistance Program in the Department of Community and Economic Development.

As of 2025 there are no food financing programs in law. However, related food assistance programs include:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps roughly 1.8 million Pennsylvanians in low-income households obtain more nutritious diets by offering food vouchers relative to how many people are living in a household.
- Executive order 2015-12, which provides for the establishment of the Governor's Food Security Partnership, the goals of which are to achieve a 98+% SNAP participation rate, an expansion of SNAP Bucks to all high-need farmers' markets, 30% of students receiving free or reduced meals during school, 60% of which will participate in school breakfast, expansions of the WIC program, and the streamlining of access to food security information and benefits, by 2020.
- Act 113 of 2010 provides for the Pennsylvania Agriculture Surplus System (PASS), which helps connect agriculture producers with non-profit organizations to donate excess food, and reimburses producers for the donation process. Serves an average of 416,000 households per year.

E. Prior Session (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

2023-2034--HB580 Kinsey--House Ag and Rural Affairs Committee (21-0); House Floor Vote (141-62); Stalled in Senate Ag and Rural Affairs

2021-2022---HB713 Kinsey-No votes taken in House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

2019-2020--HB1814-Kinsey-No Votes taken in House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

2017-2018---SB1100 Schwank--No votes taken in Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No:	HB0608 PN0616	Prepared By:	Destiny Zeiders 7177830686
Committee:	Agriculture & Rural Affairs	Executive Director:	Destiny Zeiders
Sponsor:	Isaacson, Mary		
Date:	3/10/2025		

A. Brief Concept

Increases penalties for ear cropping of dogs.

C. Analysis of the Bill

HB608 amends Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) further providing for the offense of cruelty to animal by increasing the penalty for ear cropping of dogs if it is not done by a properly licensed veterinarian. The penalty increase is from a simple summary offense to a misdemeanor of the second degree for the first violation and a misdemeanor of the first degree for a second or subsequent violation.

Effective Date:

60 Days

G. Relevant Existing Laws

Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) Chapter § 5533 Cruelty to animal

Current law requires ear cropping to be done by a licensed veterinarian, if it is not, it is considered a summary offense.

E. Prior Session (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

2023-2024

HB222 Isaacson--Referred to Judiciary and stalled in committee

HB2022-2023

HB506 Isaacson--Referred to Judiciary and stalled in committee

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No:	HB0587 PN0596	Prepared By:	Destiny Zeiders (717) 783-0686
Committee:	Agriculture & Rural Affairs	Executive Director:	Destiny Zeiders
Sponsor:	Friel, Paul		
Date:	3/3/2025		

A. Brief Concept

Establishes a certification requirement for haulers and brokers of food processing residuals (FPRs).

C. Analysis of the Bill

HB 587 creates the freestanding Hauler or Broker of Food Processing Residuals Certification Act.

Key Definitions

"Broker of food processing residuals" A person who, for a fee or other remuneration, provides coordination for transport or application of food processing residuals from a property owned or controlled by another or to a property owned or controlled by another.

"Food processing residuals" The term has the same meaning as "food processing waste" under section 103 of the Solid Waste Management Act (SWMA).

"Food processing residuals data sheet" a written document that meets the requirements established by the commission, in consultation with the department, and specifies the quantity, content, characterization, origin, age, prior possessors and processing of food processing residuals, dates and parties to any prior transfers of possession, intended site for storage prior to land application, if applicable, and intended site of land application in the course of normal farming operation.

"Hauler of food processing residuals" A person who, for a fee or other remuneration, provides transport or application for transport or application of food processing residuals from a property owned or controlled by another or to a property owned or controlled by another.

Certification Program

Requires the PA Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the State Conservation Commission to establish a certification program for haulers and brokers of FPRs within 18 months of the effective date of this legislation. Certifications shall be in effect for 3 years and eligible for renewal if the hauler or broker has completed 6 credits of continuing education as approved by the PDA. PDA shall establish regulations for additional conditions and fees for certification as deemed appropriate.

Educational and Filing Requirements

Requires PDA, in consultation with the Commission, to develop training and educational requirements, including the authority to approve programs developed by educational institutions. The training shall address the following topics:

- The best management practices with respect to transport, storage, and application of FPRs.
- Information necessary for identifying, understanding, and following a land application system with emphasis on best practices for proper application and timing
- Recordkeeping to meet all regulatory requirements.

- Procedures necessary for the development, preparation and maintenance of accurate FPR data sheets.

Requires the Commission, in coordination with PDA, to develop a FPR data sheet, which shall include the following:

- The quantity, content, characterization, origin, age, prior processors, and processing of FPRs, including testing as required by the land application system.
- The dates and parties to any prior transfers of possession of FPRs.
- The intended site for land application or any other destination where FPRs will be utilized or disposed.
- Any other required information necessary to identify, track and determine appropriate FPR handling, storage and application rates

Requirements for Haulers and Brokers

- Prohibits haulers and brokers of FPRs from transporting or applying FPRs in PA unless they successfully complete, maintain and receive the appropriate certification.
- Requires haulers and brokers to ensure that a complete data sheet has been transmitted to the Commission and any recipients of the FPRs.
- Requires all parties to maintain records for 3 years and make available upon request
- FPR's shall be hauled, brokered, or transferred only by a certified hauler or broker of FPR's who must provide an FPR data sheet to all transferees and data sheets must be maintained for 3 years

Penalties

- Makes it unlawful to fail to comply with the act or to cause or assist in violation of this act and any related regulations or orders issued.
- Allows PDA to assess administrative penalties for violations of this act, with a maximum of \$1,000 for the first day of the violation and \$500 for each additional day of continued violation. Certain factors for consideration in determining the amount will be assessed. In cases on inability to collect penalties, the department may refer the matter to the Office of General Counsel (OGC).
- Provides for civil remedies and enforcement.

Enforcement, Revocation, or Suspension of Certification

PDA may suspend or revoke a certification granted under this act if it finds that the hauler or broker of FPR's has failed to comply with the act, the certification criteria, regulation promulgated under this act or an order of the department under this act. A person may appeal a penalty to the Secretary of PDA within 30 days and the Secretary shall issue a decision within 30 days of the appeal.

Preemption of Local Ordinances

Except as otherwise specifically provided in this act an ordinance or regulation of a political subdivision may not prohibit or attempt to regulate the certification or operations or transportation of haulers or brokers of food processing residuals.

Other provisions

Provides that nothing in the act shall limit powers conferred upon PDA, the Commission, PDA or a county conservation act under the Clean Streams Law, SWMA, or Commercial Manure Hauler and Broker Certification Act.

Provides for limited liability for a person complying with the act.

Effective Date:

60 DAYS

G. Relevant Existing Laws

FPR haulers and brokers are not currently required to receive specific certifications. Manure haulers and brokers are regulated under the Commercial Manure Hauler and Broker Certification Act (Act 49 of 2004).

This bill references sections and definitions that are not currently in the SWMA, but are part of HB 586 (Friel).

The SWMA defines food processing waste to mean "residual materials in liquid or solid form generated in the slaughtering of poultry and livestock, or in processing and converting fish, seafood, milk, meat, and eggs to food products; it also means residual materials generated in the processing, converting, or manufacturing of fruits, vegetables, crops and other commodities into marketable food items."

Several townships have passed or are in the process of developing ordinances to ban or regulate the land application of FPR's.

E. Prior Session (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

2023-2024

HB 2594 House ERE Committee (16-9); House Floor Vote (165-37); Stalled in Senate Ag and Rural Affairs Committee

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LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 861

Sponsor:

Printer's No. 889

- 1 Amend Bill, page 2, line 24, by striking out "in 60 days" and
- 2 inserting
- 3 immediately