

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

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SENATE BILL 572
Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources Committee Substitute Adopted 4/22/15

Short Title: Agricultural Regulatory Relief.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 30, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE REGULATORY RELIEF TO FARMERS BY REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO STUDY BRIDGE WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS IN AGRICULTURAL AREAS AND THE REGULATIONS GOVERNING TRANSPORT OF FUEL FOR AGRICULTURAL USE BY FARM VEHICLES AND BY REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO STUDY REGULATORY BARRIERS TO INCREASING DRAINAGE OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) DOT Study. – The Department of Transportation shall study the following:

- (1) Weight limits set by the Board of Transportation for bridges on roads serving areas of the State with significant agricultural and forestry production, including (i) the impact on transport of agricultural and forestry products due to additional transportation costs required to detour around weight restricted bridges, (ii) whether this impact is factored into bridge weight limit decisions, and (iii) the impacts on safety and transportation infrastructure were accommodations to be made for agricultural and forest product transport in areas of the State where bridge weight restrictions cause a significant hardship either due to the volume of farm or forest products transportation traffic impacted or the length of detours caused by the weight restriction.
- (2) Limits and regulatory barriers on the transportation of fuel for use in agricultural or forestry activities to farms or forestry areas and from one farm or forestry area to another farm or forestry area, focusing on restrictions with respect to roads and routing in order to comply with vehicle weight limits.

SECTION 1.(b) Report. – The Department shall report its findings and recommendations, including any legislative proposals, to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee and the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission no later than February 1, 2016.

SECTION 2.(a) DENR Study. – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall study regulatory barriers faced by farmers in counties regulated under Article 7 of Chapter 113A of the General Statutes. The General Assembly finds that these farmers are impacted by diminished drainage from their farmland due to increases in coastal sound levels as the inlets connecting those sounds to the Atlantic Ocean have experienced increased



1 shoaling and a resulting decrease in freshwater throughput. As a result, there is an increasing
2 need to pump this nondraining surface water into canals and other man-made drainage
3 structures in order to continue the use of the land for agricultural activity. The report shall
4 include the Department's recommendations for economically viable and environmentally sound
5 methods for sufficient drainage of coastal agricultural lands impacted by declines in drainage
6 from North Carolina's coastal sounds.

7 **SECTION 2.(b)** Report. – The Department shall report its findings and
8 recommendations, including any legislative proposals, to the Environmental Review
9 Commission and the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission no later than
10 February 1, 2016.

11 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.