

SUBJECT: Eliminating certain reporting requirements for Department of Agriculture

COMMITTEE: Agriculture and Livestock — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — T. King, Anderson, M. González, Kacal, Kleinschmidt,  
Springer, White

0 nays

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 16 — 29-0

WITNESSES: *(On House companion bill, HB 2513)*  
For — None

Against — None

On — Catherine Wright-Steele, Texas Department of Agriculture

BACKGROUND: Texas Agriculture Finance Authority (TAFA) provides financial incentives to individuals to establish or enhance their farm or ranch operations or to establish agriculture-related businesses.

The Texas Department of Rural Affairs (TDRA) was abolished and its core programs transferred to TDA in 2011.

DIGEST: SB 772 would eliminate several reporting requirements of the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), including several carried over from when the Texas Department of Rural Affairs (TDRA) was abolished and its core programs were transferred to TDA in 2011.

**Texas Agriculture Finance Authority (TAFA) Report Submission Requirements.** The bill would strike requirements that the Texas Agriculture Finance Authority (TAFA) file a copy of the annual budget and a copy of the activities report with the governor and Legislature each year.

**Rural Issues Report.** The bill would repeal Government Code, sec. 487.056 requiring the Texas Department of Rural Affairs (TDRA) to

submit a biennial report regarding the activities of the department, the activities of the Texas Rural Foundation, and any findings and recommendations relating to rural issues.

The bill would add reporting on the Texas Rural Foundation to the Texas Rural Policy Plan reporting.

**Nutrition Farmer's Market Report.** The bill would repeal Agriculture Code, sec. 15.006 requiring an annual TDA and Health and Human Services Commission report concerning the special nutrition program to distribute to certain participants of the W.I.C. (women, infants, and children) program food coupons redeemable only at farmers markets located in areas in which the program is implemented.

**Report on Transactions Citrus Marketing Order.** The bill would repeal Ag. Code, sec. 102.167 (e) and (f) requiring a biennial TDA report to the governor of transactions under provisions relating to citrus marketing agreements and licenses, a monthly TDA report to the comptroller of public accounts of all money received under such provisions, and a requirement that the comptroller deposit such money in the state treasury.

**Community Telecommunications Alliance Report on Grant Projects.** The bill would repeal Gov. Code, sec. 487.653 requiring TDRA to submit a biennial report to the Legislature detailing the grant activities of the program and grant recipients.

**Condition of Rural Communities Annual Report.** The bill would strike Gov. Code, sec. 487.051 (a)(5) regarding the annual report describing and evaluating the condition of rural communities.

**Effective date.** This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2013.

SUPPORTERS  
SAY:

SB 772 would eliminate obsolete and redundant reporting requirements for the Texas Department of Agriculture so that resources could be dedicated to relevant reporting requirements and direct customer service to Texans.

**Texas Agriculture Finance Authority (TAFA) Report Submission Requirements.** It is unnecessary for the Texas Agriculture Finance

Authority (TAFAs) to file a copy of the annual budget and a copy of the activities report with the governor and Legislature each year. It would be more cost efficient to have information regarding an annual audit of the authority's accounts and operating and financial statements be readily available upon request.

**Rural Issues Report.** The biennial report containing information from Texas Department of Rural Affairs (TDRA) regarding the activities of the department, the activities of the Texas Rural Foundation, and any findings and recommendations relating to rural issues is a carryover from TDRA. It is redundant with a statutory report by the Texas Rural Health and Economic Development Advisory Committee, which was established when TDRA was abolished and its core programs transferred to TDA in 2011.

**Nutrition Farmer's Market Report.** The Nutrition Farmer's Market Report is redundant of federal reporting requirements for this federally funded program. The outlined information is readily available upon request so continuing to generate a unique report to meet the requirements of this statute is an inefficient use of resources.

**Report on Citrus Marketing Order Transactions.** Sec. 102.167 of the Agriculture Code authorizes TDA to establish a marketing order to limit or provide a method for limiting the total quantity of any grade, variety, size, or quality of citrus fruit that may be produced in three counties. TDA is authorized to establish a committee to collect an assessment and administer funds collected. Statute mandates a report on the fees and assessments collected. However, the citrus marketing order has never been used in its 29-year history.

**Community Telecommunications Alliance Report on Grant Projects.** The biennial report to the Legislature detailing the grant activities of the program and grant recipients is a carryover from the TDRA and is unnecessary because the program is not funded or operating.

**Condition of Rural Communities Annual Report.** The annual report describing and evaluating the condition of rural communities is a carryover from TDRA. It is redundant with a statutory report by the Texas Rural Health and Economic Development Advisory Committee established when TDRA was abolished and its core programs transferred to TDA in 2011.

OPPONENTS  
SAY: No apparent opposition.

NOTES: The House companion bill, HB 2513 by Springer, was reported favorably by the House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock on April 3 and sent to the Local and Consent Calendars Committee.