

Legislative Analysis



AGRICULTURE AND RURAL COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

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Senate Bill 226 (Substitute H-4)

Sponsor: Sen. Jud Gilbert, II

House Committee: Agriculture

Senate Committee: Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism

Complete to 5-18-05

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 226 AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE 5-17-05

The bill would require the director of the Department of Environmental Quality to convene an agriculture and rural communities roundtable to discuss how the laws, rules, and policies administered by the department and the Department of Agriculture (MDA) affect farmers, food processors, agribusinesses, rural counties, and municipalities located within a rural county. The roundtable would have to include the director of the MDA and, at the least, nine individuals invited by the DEQ director, including two from an association representing farmers, two from an association representing food processors, two from an association representing agribusiness, one from a township in a rural county, one from a city or village in a rural county, and one from a rural county. Before issuing invitations, the director would have to first consult with the legislative standing committees with primary responsibility for agriculture. The roundtable would have to convene at least twice per year, with the initial meeting occurring within 90 days of the bill's effective date. (If the bill is enacted after September 30, the roundtable would only have to meet once that first calendar year.)

The meetings would be open to the public in a place available to the general public, with at least one meeting each year to be held in a rural community. At that meeting, the public would have to be provided an opportunity to address the roundtable. The DEQ would be required to post notices of the meetings on its website [www.michigan.gov/deq] and other places it deems appropriate, and prepare a summary of each meeting and make that summary available on its website and to members of the roundtable, the general public, and the appropriate legislative standing committees.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would not have a significant fiscal impact on the Department of Environmental Quality. Any costs incurred for the meetings held under the legislation would be absorbed within the department's existing budget.

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