

HOUSE BILL NO. 5406

October 14, 2021, Introduced by Reps. Witwer, Garza, Lasinski, Hope, Cambensy, Bellino, Rendon, Posthumus, Puri, Haadsma, Tyrone Carter, Weiss, Clemente, Sowerby, Cynthia Johnson and Sneller and referred to the Committee on Government Operations.

A bill to create the office of rural development within the department of agriculture and rural development; and to prescribe the powers and duties of the office of rural development, the deputy of the office of rural development, and certain state departments and officials.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 Sec. 1. As used in this act:

2 (a) "Commission" means the commission on agriculture and rural
3 development.

4 (b) "Department" means the department of agriculture and rural

1 development.

2 (c) "Director" means the director of the department.

3 (d) "Office" means the office of rural development created
4 under section 3.

5 Sec. 3. (1) The office of rural development is created within
6 the department.

7 (2) The office shall provide the director and the executive
8 office with counsel and perspective on the impact of current laws
9 and legislation, executive orders, policies, regulations, rules,
10 and spending. The office shall assist other state departments and
11 agencies on addressing relevant issues and creating policy
12 solutions that impact rural areas of this state.

13 (3) Beginning January 1, 2023, the deputy of the office shall
14 be appointed by the director from a list of 5 individuals selected
15 by the commission who are qualified by training and experience to
16 perform the duties and exercise the powers of the office and the
17 deputy of the office. The deputy of the office will be the primary
18 liaison for rural development in this state and will oversee the
19 office. The individual appointed as deputy of the office under this
20 subsection must meet the following criteria:

21 (a) Have substantial knowledge of and experience with issues
22 of primary importance to rural areas of this state, including, but
23 not limited to, economic development and infrastructure.

24 (b) Be skilled in collaboration, project management, and
25 intergovernmental affairs.

26 (c) Be knowledgeable in federal, state, private sector,
27 nonprofit, foundation, and other grant and loans programs and
28 opportunities.

29 Sec. 5. The deputy of the office shall establish procedures

1 for the office for budgeting, expending money, and employing
2 personnel according to the management and budget act, 1984 PA 431,
3 MCL 18.1101 to 18.1594.

4 Sec. 7. The office shall do all of the following:

5 (a) Evaluate, analyze, and address the ramifications of
6 population and demographic trends in rural areas of this state.

7 (b) Work with the commission, department, and governor's
8 office to identify existing state and federal policies that impact
9 rural areas and create new policy goals.

10 (c) Analyze and provide guidance on education-related issues
11 and the effects on rural communities, students, schools, and
12 economies.

13 (d) Collaborate and coordinate with various state departments
14 and agencies to address critical issues that impact rural
15 development in this state.

16 (e) Evaluate energy and communication in rural areas of this
17 state and analyze how energy and communication issues are impacting
18 the livability, local economies, and opportunities in rural areas
19 of this state.

20 (f) Improve access to existing resources for rural
21 municipalities and economic development organizations.

22 (g) Engage stakeholders from across this state to provide for
23 better collaboration and idea sharing.

24 (h) Streamline access to state and federal resources for rural
25 development.

26 (i) Provide assistance to rural communities in applying for
27 state and federal grants.

28 (j) Engage with local governments, businesses, and economic
29 development groups in rural areas.

1 (k) Identify new opportunities to create programs and
2 incentives to support rural businesses.

3 (l) Coordinate with the department's tribal liaison and tribal
4 leaders in this state.

5 (m) Work with the department's agriculture development
6 division to implement funding and oversight for rural development
7 grants and assist communities and organizations in applying for
8 rural development grants.