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S.B. 233
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Hicks-Hudson

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SUMMARY

- Creates the Ohio Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force to make recommendations to the General Assembly for expanding and supporting a state, local, and organic food system.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Ohio Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force

The bill creates the Ohio Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force to make recommendations to the General Assembly for expanding and supporting a state, local, and organic food system. The Task Force must develop a plan containing policy and funding recommendations for expanding and supporting such an organic food system. The Task Force must prepare and submit its plan, which is explained in greater detail, below, in a report to the General Assembly within two years after the bill's effective date. Following its submission, the Task Force ceases to exist.

Membership

The bill requires the Governor to appoint 29 Task Force members as follows:

1. One representative each from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Health;
2. Four organic farmers, representing the dairy, meat, vegetable, and grains sectors;
3. Four organic specialty crop producers, representing different flower, fruit, viticulture, aquaculture, fiber, vegetable, and ornamental sectors;
4. Two organic food processors;
5. One organic distributor and one nonorganic distributor;
6. Three representatives of not-for-profit educational organizations;

7. One organic certifier;
8. One consumer representative;
9. Two representatives of farm organizations;
10. One university agricultural specialist;
11. One philanthropic organization representative;
12. One food retailer representative;
13. Two municipal corporation representatives from different communities in Ohio;
14. Four representatives from community-based organizations focusing on food access, to include at least three members who represent under-represented ethnicities or minority groups; and
15. One chef specializing in the preparation of locally grown organic foods.

Under the bill, the Governor must make appointments to the Task Force within 60 days of the bill's effective date. Each member of the Task Force serves until the report is submitted to the General Assembly. Each member is subject to removal at the pleasure of the Governor. Any vacancy is filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

Plan for expanding and supporting an organic food system

The Task Force must identify and describe all of the following in the plan addressing policy and funding recommendations for expanding and supporting a state, local, and organic food system:

1. Obstacles to increasing locally grown food and local organic food production;
2. Land preservation and acquisition opportunities for local and organic agriculture in rural, suburban, and urban areas;
3. Farmer training and development opportunities;
4. Financial incentives, technical support, and training necessary to help Ohio farmers to transition to local, organic, and specialty crop production by minimizing their financial losses during the transition period;
5. Strategies and funding needs to make fresh and affordable Ohio-grown foods more accessible, both in rural and urban communities, with an emphasis on creating new food outlets in communities that need them;
6. Financial and technical support necessary to build connections between landowners, farmers, buyers, and consumers;
7. Financial and technical support necessary to build a local food infrastructure of processing, storage, and distribution;
8. Financial and technical support necessary to develop new food and agriculture-related businesses for local food and organic food production and distribution, such as on-farm

processing, micro-markets, incubator kitchens, and marketing and communications businesses;

9. Financial and technical support necessary to expand the development of farmers markets, roadside markets, and local grocery stores in unserved and underserved areas, as well as the creation of year-round public markets in large communities;
10. Best practices and opportunities for the development of local food and organic food production;
11. Opportunities to educate the public and producers about the benefits of local foods systems and about the development opportunities;
12. Legal impediments to local food and organic food production and recommendations for a remedy to those impediments.¹

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	07-09-25

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¹ Section 1.