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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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S.B. 288
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Hicks-Hudson

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SUMMARY

- Creates the Ohio Food and Agriculture Policy Council to make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding food systems that strengthen the state's food and farm economies.
- Appropriates \$500,000 in FY 2026 from the GRF to the Department of Agriculture to use to support the activities of the Council.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Ohio Food and Agriculture Policy Council

The bill creates the Ohio Food and Agriculture Policy Council to make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding food systems that strengthen the state's food and farm economies. The Council must engage in advocacy, education, and policy work to enhance the health and wellness of Ohio citizens and to encourage the sustainability of natural resources.

Membership and administration

The Council is comprised of the Director of Agriculture or the Director's designee, who serves as the Chairperson, and all of the following members appointed by the Governor:

1. One member who represents the Ohio Hospital Association;
2. One member who represents Ohio State University Extension;
3. One member who represents Central State University Extension;
4. Three members who represent the Ohio Farm Bureau;
5. One member who represents urban farming;
6. One member who represents rural farming;
7. One member who represents statewide food banks; and

8. One member who is a registered lobbyist who represents Ohio cooperatives.

The Governor must make appointments to the Council within 60 days of the bill's effective date, and the Council must convene within 90 days of the bill's effective date. Each appointed member of the Council serves for a four-year term and is subject to removal at the pleasure of the Governor. Any vacancy on the Council is filled in the same manner as the original appointment. After the expiration of each appointed member's four-year term, the Council ceases to exist.

The Council is considered a part of the Department of Agriculture (ODA) for administrative purposes. It may request from the ODA Director, and the Director must provide, meeting space, assistance, services, and information to enable the Council to carry out its duties.¹

Council duties

The Council must do all of the following:

1. Develop a statewide plan containing policy and funding recommendations for promoting and supporting an equitable, healthy, and sustainable food system on the state and local level;
2. Engage in educational outreach;
3. Make recommendations to the General Assembly as needed; and
4. Compile and deliver, by March 1 each year that the Council is in existence, an annual report to the General Assembly detailing the Council's recommendations concerning food security, food access, food production and distribution, food waste, economic development, food procurement, food chain workers, and food systems resilience.²

Appropriation

The bill also appropriates \$500,000 in FY 2026 from the GRF to the Department to use to support the activities of the Council.³

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	10-08-25

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¹ Section 1(A) to (C).

² Section 1(D).

³ Sections 2 to 4.