

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Agriculture

BILL: SB 1398

INTRODUCER: Senator Collins

SUBJECT: Florida Crop Diversification Commission

DATE: January 16, 2024

REVISED: _____

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Burse	Becker	AG	Favorable
2.		AEG	
3.		FP	

I. Summary:

SB 1398 creates the Florida Crop Diversification Commission (commission), adjunct to the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (department), and establishes the commission's powers and duties. The commission is directed to evaluate alternative agricultural crops, contract for the design and implementation of the Florida Crop Diversification Initiative, develop best management practices for crops or products recommended by the commission, and assist local economic development councils in encouraging the development of manufacturing and processing facilities for new crops or products recommended by the commission.

The bill also requires the commission to publish their findings on an annual basis. By July 1, 2026 and each July 1 thereafter, the commission shall submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The bill appropriates \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds for fiscal year 2024-25 for the purpose of implementing this bill.

The bill shall take effect upon becoming a law.

II. Present Situation:

Florida Agriculture

Florida's 47,500 farms and ranches utilize 9.7 million acres and continue to produce a wide variety of safe and dependable food products.¹ Agricultural land (cropland and ranchland) and

¹ FDACS, Florida Agriculture Overview and Statistics, available at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Florida-Agriculture-Overview-and-Statistics> (last visited January 12, 2024).

forest land make up nearly 2/3 of the state's land area.² There are over 200-300 commodities produced and some form of agriculture in all 67 counties.³ Florida's agriculture, natural resources, and food industries supported 2.4 million fulltime and part-time jobs throughout Florida's economy (14.2% of all jobs in the state), contributing \$149.6 billion to gross state product in 2018.⁴

In 2021, Florida ranked first in the United States in total floriculture sales and in the value of production for sweetcorn, foliage plants for indoor use, Valencia oranges, sugarcane, fresh market tomatoes and watermelons. Florida ranked second nationally in the value of production for bell peppers, grapefruit, all oranges, strawberries and non-Valencia oranges. The state ranked fourth in cabbage, cantaloupe and peanuts.⁵ The state also ranked 1st in ornamental fish, 2nd in alligators and 3rd in horses and ponies in the United States.⁶

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 creates s. 570.233, F.S., establishing the Florida Crop Diversification Commission (commission), adjunct to the department. It provides that the commission shall be composed of the following nine members:

- The Commissioner of Agriculture or their designee.
- The dean for research of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences of the University of Florida or their designee.
- The following members, appointed by the commissioner based upon their knowledge and experience in agricultural production, processing, or manufacturing:
 - Four members who are currently involved in agricultural production or who have been involved in agricultural production within the last 3 years.
 - One member who has experience in agricultural processing or manufacturing.
 - One member who has experience in the packing or processing of fresh agricultural products.
 - One member who has experience in agricultural marketing analysis and the viability of agricultural products.

The bill directs the commission to:

- Evaluate alternative agricultural crops and determine whether there exists one or more viable crops or products that would provide an economic benefit to growers using current agricultural infrastructure on land that has been taken out of production by diseases or adverse weather conditions.
- Contract for the design and implementation of the Florida Crop Diversification Initiative. The initiative must provide direct cash payments to nurseries and agricultural producers in

² IFAS, Florida's Agriculture and Natural Resource Facts, available at <https://ifas.ufl.edu/media/ifasufl/ifa-dark-blue/docs/pdf/impact/FloridaAgFactsFactsheet.2020.Prt.pdf> (last visited January 12, 2024).

³ IFAS, Florida's Agriculture and Food System Fast Facts 2021, available at <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/media/sfylifasufl/orange/ag-nat-res/docs/pdf/Florida-Agriculture-and-Food-Systems-Fast-Facts-2021.pdf> (last visited January 12, 2024).

⁴ IFAS, Florida's Agriculture and Natural Resource Facts, available at <https://ifas.ufl.edu/media/ifasufl/ifa-dark-blue/docs/pdf/impact/FloridaAgFactsFactsheet.2020.Prt.pdf> (last visited January 12, 2024).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

this state in order to rapidly stimulate the adoption of alternative crops, moderate the required economic outlay, and speed the economic recovery of producers, packers, nurseries, processors, and communities. The entity with which the commission contracts for the Florida Crop Diversification Initiative must be a nonprofit organization that has a history of focusing on alternative crops and has the organizational capacity to manage a statewide initiative and carry out the requirements of this paragraph.

- Develop best management practices for crops or products recommended by the commission.
- Assist local economic development councils in encouraging the development of manufacturing and processing facilities for new crops or products recommended by the commission.
- Publish the findings of the commission on an annual basis after review and approval of the commissioner.

The bill also requires the commission to submit a report by July 1, 2026 and each July 1 thereafter, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report must contain, at minimum, the following:

- Information about each crop or product recommended, detailing the environmental impact of each.
- An assessment of each recommended crop's suitability to this state's climate, and the expected economic benefit to growers and communities in this state.
- Recommendations for best practices to sustain and improve the agricultural industry in this state.

Section 2 appropriates \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds for fiscal year 2024-25 for the purpose of implementing this bill.

Section 3 provides that the bill shall take effect upon becoming a law.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the department for the purpose of creating the Florida Crop Diversification Commission.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 570.233 of the Florida Statutes:

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.