A bill to be entitled
An act relating to the environmental value of
agricultural lands and timberlands; creating s.
570.233, F.S.; requiring the Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services, in collaboration with specified
entities, to determine the environmental value that
agricultural lands and timberlands provide to this
state based on certain factors; requiring the
department to develop a cost-share reimbursement
program to provide funding to agricultural landowners
and timberland owners for the implementation of best
management practices; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, maintaining healthy and sustainable agricultural
and timber industries is vital to this state’s environmental
resources, natural resources, and economy, and
WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the significant
environmental contributions the agricultural and timber
industries provide to water quality and quantity, air
purification, and habitat for wildlife, including threatened and
dergered species, and
WHEREAS, the Legislature also recognizes that urban and
coastal areas continue to expand increasing pressures on
agricultural lands and timberlands, causing a significant
decrease in acreage, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 570.233, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

570.233 Environmental value of agricultural lands and timberlands.—The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, and the agricultural and timber industries, shall:

(1) Develop a formula to determine the value that agricultural lands and timberlands in this state provide for water recharge, stormwater filtration, wildlife habitat, and water quality benefits.

(2) Develop a cost-share reimbursement program to provide funding incentives to agricultural landowners and timberland owners for the implementation of best management practices. The department may provide up to 75 percent cost share to the landowners based on the values calculated pursuant to subsection (1) for their lands.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.