



**This Bill Analysis
reflects the contents
of the bill as it was
presented in
committee.**

HOUSE BILL 130: Agriculture Crops Disaster Relief.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House Agriculture and Environment. If favorable, re-refer to Appropriations. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	February 26, 2025
Introduced by:	Reps. Dixon, Penny, N. Jackson, Eddins	Prepared by:	Kyle Evans
Analysis of:	First Edition		Committee Counsel

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 130 would appropriate \$475,000,000 to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) for the 2024 Agricultural Disaster Crop Loss Program, to be established by this bill for the purpose of providing financial assistance to farmers with verified losses from an agricultural disaster in 2024.*

CURRENT LAW AND BACKGROUND:

There is currently no statewide program aimed at providing financial assistance to farmers for crop losses that occurred because of an agricultural disaster. However, the General Assembly has enacted disaster-specific Agricultural Crop Loss Programs for Hurricane Florence (Section 5.11 of [S.L. 2018-136](#)) and Tropical Storm Fred (Section 5.9B of [S.L. 2021-180](#)).

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1.1 sets out legislative findings, highlighting the agriculture industry's economic impact in the State.

Section 2.1 would appropriate \$475 million to DACS for the 2024 Agricultural Disaster Crop Loss Program (Program), established in Section 3.1 of this bill. The funds appropriated to DACS would transfer through the State Emergency Response and Disaster Relief Fund (SERDF) from the following sources:

- \$200 million from the Stabilization and Inflation Reserve.
- \$200 million from the Information Technology Reserve.
- \$75 million from the Economic Development Project Reserve.

Additionally, DACS would be directed to use any remaining funds from the Tropical Storm Fred Crop Loss Program to assist farmers experiencing an agricultural disaster in 2024.

Section 3.1(a) would establish the Program within DACS, and direct that Program funds must be used to provide financial assistance to farmers with verified losses from an agricultural disaster in the State in 2024. DACS may use up to 1% of Program funds for administrative purposes. To qualify for financial assistance, a person must have experienced a verifiable loss of agricultural commodities as a result of an agricultural disaster in 2024, the person's farm must be located in an affected area for the respective agricultural disaster, and the agricultural commodity must have been planted but not harvested on or before January 1, 2024, or, for aquaculture commodities, the commodities were being raised on or before January 1, 2024.

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Section 3.1(b) would require a person to verify his or her crop loss by submitting to DACS either a Form 578 on file with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency or, for crops not typically reported on a Form 578, a form created by DACS, no later than 30 days after this bill becomes law. DACS would be authorized to extend this deadline by 30 days, upon written request of the applying person, for nursery crops, fruit-bearing trees and bushes, and specialty crops.

Section 3.1(c) would establish the criteria that DACS must use in administering the Program, including payment calculations, funding availability, and payment recipients.

Section 3.1(d) would authorize DACS to audit a recipient's records to ensure that the funds are used in accordance with the Program requirements.

Section 3.1(e) would require that awarded funds are used for agricultural production expenses and recovery of losses due to the impacts of the agricultural disaster and direct DACS to develop guidelines to ensure compliance with this requirement.

Section 3.1(f) would provide that if DACS determines that a person receiving Program funds provided inaccurate information, that the person must refund the entire amount of the financial assistance received.

Section 3.1(g) would define certain terms. Notably, "agricultural commodity" is defined to include "any crop, flowering plant, aquaculture species, fruit, grain, native grass, ornamental plant, sod, tree, or vegetable." An "agricultural commodity" does not include stored grain.

Section 3.1(h) would require DACS to report to the General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division every six months on the Program, including information about the number of applicants, grants awarded, geographic distribution of grants, total funding available, encumbered, and disbursed, and any refunds made to the Program.

Section 3.1(i) would sunset the Program 30 months after it becomes effective. Any funds remaining in the Program at that time would revert to the SERDF.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act would be effective when it becomes law.