



# Ohio Legislative Service Commission

## Bill Analysis

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### H.B. 240

129th General Assembly  
(As Introduced)

**Reps.** Weddington and Amstutz, Antonio, Ashford, Combs, Foley, R. Hagan, Szollosi, Blair

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## BILL SUMMARY

- Creates the Ohio Sustainable Food Advisory Council, requires it to develop proposed sustainable food programs and policies for the state and specifies program and policy issues that it may consider.
- Requires the Council to report its findings and recommendations annually to the General Assembly and the Governor.

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## CONTENT AND OPERATION

### Ohio Sustainable Food Advisory Council

#### Development of sustainable food programs and policies

The bill creates the Ohio Sustainable Food Advisory Council and requires it, on a continuing basis, to develop proposed sustainable food programs and policies for Ohio. In doing so, the Council may consider any of the following program and policy issues:

(1) An in-depth assessment of the foods that are served to public school students under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, including the possibility of increasing the amount of sustainable local food used in those Programs and the nutritional, behavioral, and performance benefits of that increase;

(2) An in-depth analysis of the possibility of meeting the needs of public assistance programs through food production processes in Ohio;

(3) An in-depth analysis of the possibility of engaging more Ohio citizens in the food production system and lowering food costs for urban dwellers in this state during

times of economic hardship, including making use of idle urban property, increasing opportunities for small farms, and developing strategies for the long-term viability of small, medium, and large farms;

(4) An in-depth analysis of the potential impacts that the production of sustainable local food would have on economic development in Ohio, both the direct impacts on the producers of sustainable local food and the actual and potential indirect impacts such as encouraging restaurants that feature locally raised agricultural products, promoting food and wine tourism, and developing a diverse food production chain;

(5) An in-depth evaluation of agriculture as a means of stewardship and enhancement of the agricultural and natural ecosystems of this state with a focus on the enhancement of the quality of life for Ohio residents, healthy and productive soils, clean water, landscape aesthetics, biological diversity, and clean air;

(6) Issues regarding how local and regional efforts could promote a sustainable local food economy by providing an information and engagement center that would assist entrepreneurs and farmers in working around any current barriers to a sustainable local food economy and in pursuing opportunities related to a sustainable local food economy;

(7) Issues regarding the identification and development of solutions to regulatory and policy barriers to the development of a strong sustainable local food economy;

(8) Issues regarding strengthening local infrastructure and entrepreneurial efforts related to a sustainable local food economy; and

(9) Any other program and policy issues the Council considers pertinent.<sup>1</sup>

### **Report of findings and recommendations**

Under the bill, not later than October 1 each year, the Council must report its findings and recommendations, including any legislative proposals or proposals for administrative actions, to the General Assembly and to the Governor.<sup>2</sup>

### **Membership and appointment**

Under the bill, the Council consists of the following members:

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. 901.81(A).

<sup>2</sup> R.C. 901.81(B).

- (1) The Director of Agriculture or the Director's designee;
- (2) The Director of Development or the Director's designee;
- (3) The Director of Health or the Director's designee;
- (4) The Director of Natural Resources or the Director's designee; and
- (5) The Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Superintendent's designee.

In addition, the Council consists of the following members appointed by the Governor:

- (1) Two persons representing small farms;
- (2) Two persons representing medium farms;
- (3) Two persons representing large farms;
- (4) One person representing the institutional food service industry with experience regarding the service of schools;
- (5) One person representing the food processing industry;
- (6) One person representing the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation; and
- (7) One person representing the Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association.

The Council also consists of the following members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

- (1) One person representing the Innovative Farmers of Ohio;
- (2) One person representing the Ohio Farmers Union;
- (3) One person representing a faith-based food and hunger agency;
- (4) One person representing an emergency food assistance agency;
- (5) One person representing an Ohio-based organic certification agency;
- (6) One person representing the health care industry in Ohio;
- (7) One person with expertise in agriculture representing a public university;

(8) One person with expertise in health and nutrition representing a public university; and

(9) Two members of the House of Representatives, one from each party.

Finally, the Council additionally consists of the following members appointed by the President of the Senate:

(1) One person with expertise in food and agriculture representing a private college;

(2) One person representing the retail food industry;

(3) One person representing the restaurant and food preparation industry;

(4) One person representing a statewide environmental advocacy organization;

(5) One person based in Ohio representing the U.S. Department of Agriculture;

(6) One person representing a farmland preservation organization;

(7) One person representing an economic development organization focused on food and agriculture;

(8) One person representing the Ohio Produce Growers and Marketers Association; and

(9) Two members of the Senate, one from each party.<sup>3</sup>

The bill provides for staggered three-year terms and requires each member to serve from the date of appointment until the end of the term for which the member was appointed. Members may be reappointed. Vacancies must be filled in the same manner as provided for original appointments. The applicable appointing authority may remove a member from the Council for failure to attend two consecutive meetings without showing good cause for the absences.<sup>4</sup>

The Director of Agriculture or the Director's designee must serve as the chairperson of the Council, and the Council annually must select from among its members a vice-chairperson and a secretary. The secretary must keep a record of its proceedings. A majority vote of the members is necessary to take action on any matter.

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<sup>3</sup> R.C. 901.80(A).

<sup>4</sup> R.C. 901.80(B).

The Council may adopt bylaws governing its operation, including bylaws that establish the frequency of meetings, which must be at least quarterly. The chairperson may appoint subcommittees.<sup>5</sup>

Serving as a member of the Council does not constitute holding a public office or position of employment under Ohio law and does not constitute grounds for removal of public officers or employees from their offices or positions of employment. Members must serve without compensation for attending Council meetings.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the Department of Agriculture must provide technical assistance to and meeting space for the Council.<sup>7</sup>

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## HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	05-24-11

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<sup>5</sup> R.C. 901.80(C).

<sup>6</sup> R.C. 901.80(D).

<sup>7</sup> R.C. 901.80(E).

