

Legislative Analysis



AGRICULTURAL TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION

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Senate Bill 225 as passed by the Senate

Sponsor: Sen. Cameron S. Brown

House Committee: Agriculture

Senate Committee: Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism

Complete to 5-2-05

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 225 AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 4-26-05

The bill would create a new act to establish the Agricultural Tourism Zoning Advisory Commission within the Department of Agriculture. "Agricultural tourism" would be defined as the practice of visiting an agribusiness, horticultural, or agricultural operation, including farms, wineries, or companion animal or livestock shows, for the purpose of recreation, education, or active involvement in the operation.

The commission would consist of seven members appointed by the director of the department: three representing agricultural tourism enterprises; two representing local government; one representing Travel Michigan; and one representing the department. Members would have to be appointed within 60 days of the bill's effective date, and would serve for the life of the commission. Members would serve without compensation, though they would be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the commission. The commission would be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

Within one year and 60 days of the bill's effective date, the commission would have to submit to the governor and the appropriate legislative standing committees a report concerning the following: (1) a discussion of the effects of local zoning on agricultural tourism, (2) model local zoning ordinance provisions to promote agricultural tourism, (3) recommendations concerning the use of logo signage to promote agricultural tourism, (4) recommendations for other measures to promote and remove barriers to agricultural tourism, and (5) any other recommendations concerning agricultural tourism. In addition, the commission would be charged with undertaking various studies necessary for the report.

The act would be repealed one year and 90 days after the bill's effective date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill could result in increased costs to the state for the reimbursement of commission members' expenses. These costs, however, would be covered by existing departmental appropriations.

Legislative Analyst: Mark Wolf

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