OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 194 (File 72, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN FARMING PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

SUMMARY

This bill eliminates the current requirement that the agriculture commissioner consult with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner before approving a request to remove a development rights restriction from agricultural land preserved under either the Farmland Preservation Program or Community Farm Preservation Program. In practice, DEEP is not consulted in these matters.

The bill also requires the agriculture commissioner to study the need to establish an annual harvest season for vehicles transporting agricultural products and report his recommendations to the Environment Committee by January 1, 2025.

Lastly, the bill repeals various agriculture statutes and makes a conforming change.

*<u>Senate Amendment "A"</u> replaces a provision establishing a year-round harvest season for vehicles transporting agricultural products with a study on the need for this provision.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

REPEALED STATUTES

The bill repeals statutes that do the following:

1. require the agriculture commissioner to establish and administer Connecticut Farm Fresh Market and Connecticut Farm Fresh Restaurant certification programs and make grocery stores'

access to economic development grants contingent on their certification as a farm fresh market (CGS § 22-38b);

2. allow the Seafood Advisory Council to use funds and enter into contracts, both of which it can already do under other statutes (CGS § 22-457); and

3. limit the agriculture department's aquaculture industry resource assessment permits to no more than 100 acres of assessed area per permit, require buoys to be placed to identify the area, and require the department to notify abutting shellfish ground owners or lease holders about the permit (CGS § 26-237e).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable
  Yea   34   Nay 0   (03/08/2024)