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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 1382 Session of  
2023

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INTRODUCED BY RABB, SAPPEY, SANCHEZ, HILL-EVANS AND HOWARD,  
JUNE 12, 2023

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,  
JUNE 12, 2023

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AN ACT

1 Establishing the Natural Fiber Task Force; and imposing duties  
2 on the Department of Agriculture.

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2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 Section 1. Short title.

5 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Natural Fiber  
6 Task Force Act.

7 Section 2. Definitions.

8 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
9 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
10 context clearly indicates otherwise:

11 "Natural fibers." Fibers created from protein, cellulose and  
12 mycelium, including wool, hemp, flax, cotton and mushrooms.

13 "Office." The Pennsylvania Office of Transformation and  
14 Opportunity.

15 "Task force." The Natural Fiber Task Force established under  
16 section 3.

17 Section 3. Establishment.

18 The Natural Fiber Task Force is established as an independent  
19 task force in which the Department of Agriculture has primary  
20 jurisdiction.

21 Section 4. Purpose.

22 The task force shall work in collaboration with the public  
23 and private sectors to develop recommendations, policies and  
24 practices for supporting the production, manufacturing and use  
25 of natural fibers in this Commonwealth.

26 Section 5. Membership.

27 (a) Number.--The task force shall consist of seven members  
28 appointed in accordance with this section and with the  
29 consideration for diversity of gender, race, ethnicity and  
30 geographical region.

1 (b) Applications for nomination.--The following process  
2 shall apply:

3 (1) The office shall, with administrative support from  
4 the Department of Agriculture, develop and manage a publicly  
5 accessible Internet website for individuals with expertise or  
6 education pertaining to the duties and subject area of the  
7 task force, to submit an application for nomination as a  
8 member of the task force. The office shall permit  
9 applications 90 days prior to consideration of the  
10 applications. After the 90-day application period, the office  
11 may not accept additional nominations until a vacancy on the  
12 task force occurs.

13 (2) The office shall verify that each applicant for  
14 nomination has the required experience or education regarding  
15 the natural fiber industry or experience with educational  
16 institutions that have programs on natural fiber farming or  
17 industry.

18 (3) After verification under paragraph (2), the office  
19 shall provide a list of all verified nominations received to:

20 (i) The Governor.

21 (ii) The President pro tempore and Minority Leader  
22 of the Senate.

23 (iii) The Speaker and Minority Leader of the House  
24 of Representatives.

25 (c) Voting on membership.--The President pro tempore and  
26 Minority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker and Minority  
27 Leader of the House of Representatives shall each have one vote  
28 to appoint four nominations from the list to the task force. Two  
29 members shall serve four-year terms and two members shall serve  
30 two-year terms as chosen by the appointing authority. Appointees

1 shall receive no less than three votes to be appointed as a  
2 member of the task force.

3 (d) Appointment by Governor.--The Governor shall appoint  
4 three initial members to the task force from the list of  
5 nominations. Two appointments shall serve a four-year term and  
6 one shall serve a two-year term as chosen by the Governor.

7 (e) Limit on terms.--A task force member other than an  
8 initial task force member shall serve no more than two four-year  
9 terms or partial terms within a 12-year period.

10 Section 6. Officers.

11 By a majority vote, the task force shall elect a chairperson.  
12 The task force may elect a vice chairperson and other officers  
13 the task force deems necessary and appropriate to facilitate the  
14 work of the task force.

15 Section 7. Operation generally.

16 (a) Bylaws, rules or procedures.--The task force may adopt  
17 bylaws, rules or procedures that it deems necessary to  
18 accomplish its purposes.

19 (b) Conduct.--The task force shall establish rules of  
20 procedure to govern the conduct of its members.

21 (c) Administrative support.--The Department of Agriculture  
22 shall provide administrative support to the task force.

23 Section 8. Vacancy.

24 A vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same  
25 manner as the original appointment in accordance with section 5.  
26 Partial term vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term of  
27 an appointed member of the task force.

28 Section 9. Meetings.

29 (a) Initial meeting.--Within 90 days of the effective date  
30 of this subsection, the task force shall hold an initial

1 meeting.

2 (b) Other meetings.--The task force shall meet at least once  
3 quarterly and shall hold other meetings as it deems necessary.

4 Section 10. Quorum.

5 (a) Number.--A majority of the members of the task force  
6 shall constitute a quorum.

7 (b) Official action.--Official action may be taken by the  
8 task force at a meeting upon a vote of a quorum of its members  
9 present in person or through electronic means.

10 Section 11. Compensation and expenses.

11 Members of the task force shall not be entitled to  
12 compensation for their services as members but shall be entitled  
13 to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in  
14 the discharge of official duties as members of the task force. A  
15 member of the task force shall be reimbursed in accordance with  
16 Commonwealth policy in effect for agencies under the Governor's  
17 jurisdiction.

18 Section 12. Records.

19 Meetings of the task force shall be subject to the  
20 requirements of 65 Pa.C.S. Ch. 7 (relating to open meetings).

21 Section 13. Powers and duties.

22 Subject to section 14, the task force shall have the  
23 following powers and duties:

24 (1) To work in collaboration with the Department of  
25 Agriculture and other State departments and agencies,  
26 representatives of the agriculture industry, representatives  
27 of the agricultural community, producers and manufacturers of  
28 natural fibers, representatives of academic institutions,  
29 representatives of agricultural organizations,  
30 representatives of fabric and garment manufactures and other

1 groups to develop:

2 (i) recommendations for supporting the expanded use  
3 of natural fibers in general in the fabric, garment and  
4 industrial textile industries and for the industries to  
5 use natural fibers grown in this Commonwealth; and

6 (ii) policies and practices to promote the  
7 production, manufacturing, procurement and use of natural  
8 fibers in this Commonwealth.

9 (2) To coordinate the collection of information and  
10 communication-related information on programs and incentives  
11 with Federal, State and local government agencies and  
12 regulatory authorities, academic institutions and  
13 agricultural, conservation, environmental and natural fiber  
14 organizations.

15 (3) To investigate and study ways to expand the  
16 production, manufacturing and use of natural fibers in this  
17 Commonwealth.

18 (4) To prepare a report that includes, at a minimum, the  
19 following:

20 (i) An overview of the status of natural fibers in  
21 this Commonwealth.

22 (ii) Recommendations regarding the following:

23 (A) Data collection and dissemination, benchmark  
24 development, targeting practices and transparency for  
25 grant making to promote the production, manufacturing  
26 and use of natural fibers in this Commonwealth.

27 (B) What practices may be applied to expand the  
28 production, manufacturing and use of natural fibers  
29 in this Commonwealth.

30 (C) Ways in which laws, regulations and other

1 policies that regulate and support the production,  
2 manufacturing and use of natural fibers in this  
3 Commonwealth could be more effectively applied.

4 (D) Ways in which programs and services offered  
5 by the Department of Agriculture and other State  
6 departments and agencies could provide for the  
7 production, manufacturing and use of natural fibers.

8 (E) Ways in which regulatory and other  
9 departmental decision-making processes could provide  
10 for the expanded production, manufacturing and use of  
11 natural fibers.

12 (F) The ongoing role of the task force in  
13 supporting the implementation and monitoring of the  
14 goals specified in this act.

15 (5) Not later than July 1, 2023, and each July 1  
16 thereafter, to prepare an annual report. The following apply:

17 (i) Each annual report shall contain recommendations  
18 and provide an update on the status of the task force's  
19 activities relative to the ways in which laws,  
20 regulations and other policies could more effectively  
21 provide for the production, manufacturing and use of  
22 natural fibers in this Commonwealth.

23 (ii) Each annual report shall be transmitted to the  
24 following:

25 (A) The Governor.

26 (B) The Department of Agriculture.

27 (C) The Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee  
28 of the Senate.

29 (D) The Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee  
30 of the House of Representatives.

1 Section 14. Access to information and records.

2 (a) Logging of information.--When the task force collects  
3 information relating to natural fibers, the production and  
4 manufacturing of natural fibers, agriculture, conservation,  
5 waste reduction relative to the production and manufacturing of  
6 fabric and garments, the environment or any other issue related  
7 to natural fibers, the task force shall log the information and  
8 identify the Commonwealth agency providing the information.

9 (b) Right-to-Know requests.--Records relating to the task  
10 force shall be accessible for inspection and duplication in  
11 accordance with the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3),  
12 known as the Right-to-Know Law.

13 Section 15. Effective date.

14 This act shall take effect in 60 days.