

**Introduced by Senator Jackson**

February 18, 2016

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An act to amend Sections 564 and 566 of, and to add Section 563 to, the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to food and agriculture.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1247, as introduced, Jackson. Environmental farming: agricultural innovation zones.

Existing law requires the Department of Food and Agriculture to establish and oversee an environmental farming program that provides incentives to farmers whose practices promote the well-being of ecosystems, air quality, and wildlife and their habitat.

This bill would also include practices that promote public health, water quality, and soil health and would require the department, as part of that program, to establish agricultural innovation zones, as defined, and to give priority to agricultural innovation zones for incentives to farmers, with special priority for agricultural innovation zones in disadvantaged communities. The bill would state the Legislature's intent relating to environmental farming practices and the establishment of agricultural innovation zones, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 563 is added to the Food and Agricultural
- 2 Code, to read:
- 3 563. The Legislature finds and declares both of the following:

1 (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to support farmers in  
2 adopting environmental farming practices near schools and day  
3 care centers that are more resilient to the unavoidable consequences  
4 of climate change and that offer other societal and ecosystem  
5 benefits.

6 (b) It is further the intent of the Legislature that the department  
7 establish agricultural innovation zones and prioritize incentives to  
8 farmers who maintain or intend to adopt an agricultural innovation  
9 zone to ensure the health and learning of future California  
10 generations and that the establishment of agricultural innovation  
11 zones in disadvantaged communities should be the highest priority.

12 SEC. 2. Section 564 of the Food and Agricultural Code is  
13 amended to read:

14 564. Unless the context otherwise requires, the following  
15 definitions govern the construction of this article:

16 (a) “Agricultural activities” means those activities that generate  
17 products as specified in Section 54004.

18 (b) “*Agricultural innovation zone*” means an area within one  
19 mile of a school or day care center where farmers follow  
20 environmental farming practices, including organic farming  
21 practices, that promote the well-being of ecosystems, air quality,  
22 public health, water quality, soil health, and wildlife and their  
23 habitat and that do not rely on synthetic inputs.

24 ~~(b)~~

25 (c) “Department” means the Department of Food and  
26 Agriculture.

27 ~~(e)~~

28 (d) “Panel” means the Scientific Advisory Panel on  
29 Environmental Farming.

30 ~~(d)~~

31 (e) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Food and Agriculture.

32 SEC. 3. Section 566 of the Food and Agricultural Code is  
33 amended to read:

34 566. (a) The department shall establish and oversee an  
35 environmental farming program. The program shall provide  
36 incentives to farmers whose practices promote the well-being of  
37 ecosystems, air quality, *public health, water quality, soil health,*  
38 and wildlife and their habitat.

39 (b) *As part of the program, the department shall establish*  
40 *agricultural innovation zones and shall give priority to agricultural*

1 *innovation zones for incentives to farmers, with special priority*  
2 *for agricultural innovation zones in disadvantaged communities.*

3 ~~(b)~~

4 (c) The department may assist in the compilation of scientific  
5 evidence from public and private sources, including the scientific  
6 community, industry, conservation organizations, and federal,  
7 state, and local agencies identifying the net environmental impacts  
8 that agriculture creates for the environment. The department shall  
9 serve as the depository of this information and provide it to federal,  
10 state, and local governments, as needed.

11 ~~(e)~~

12 (d) The department shall conduct the activities specified in this  
13 article with existing resources, to the extent they are available.