

One Hundred Seventh Legislature - Second Session - 2022

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB925

Chairperson: Senator Bruce Bostelman

Committee: Natural Resources

Date of Hearing: January 26, 2022

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 925 would create the Resilient Soils and Water Quality Act. The purposes of the Act are to: accelerate the use of best management practices for healthy soil; protect and improve soil and water quality; protect the public's health and enhance agricultural production and profitability; address soil health economics, resource stewardship, and environmental issues; increase awareness, education and promotion of best management practices for healthy soils through producer-to-producer, peer-to-peer, and mentoring relationships; and provide proof of healthy soil benefits through demonstration and research farms.

Under LB 925, the Department of Natural Resources would provide technical and legal assistance in the formation of a producer learning community (PLC). The producer learning community is an agricultural producer-led nonprofit voluntary organization dedicated to fostering the learning and sharing of knowledge in order to carry out the purposes of the Resilient Soils and Water Quality Act.

The department is directed to hire a facilitator to lead efforts to organize the producer learning community and assist it in fundraising efforts. The facilitator shall serve as an ex officio member of the PLC. The facilitator may be located outside of Lincoln.

To assist with the formation of the PLC, the department is encouraged to partner with entities such as the University of Nebraska, the NRDs, and farm organizations. The department is to divide the state into different regions to establish demonstration and research farms that are representative of the region's agricultural diversity and may enter into lease agreements with private landowners for such purpose. The department is to submit an annual report reflecting the progress made in protecting and improving soil and water quality across the state.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Tim Gragert