



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 31/Senate Bill 35: Farm Tractor Rollover Protection Grants

Assembly Bill 31 (AB 31) was introduced on February 22, 2019, and referred to the Assembly Committee on Agriculture. On May 28, 2019, a public hearing was held. On October 1, 2019, the Assembly Committee on Agriculture recommended the bill for passage on a vote of 14 to 0. On November 12, 2019, Assembly Amendment 1 (AA 1) was introduced.

Senate Bill 35 (SB 35) was introduced on February 15, 2019, and referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Revenue and Financial Institutions. On March 26, 2019, a public hearing was held. On May 1, 2019, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Revenue and Financial Institutions recommended the bill for passage on a vote of 9 to 0. On November 12, 2019, Senate Amendment 1 (SA 1) was introduced.

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT LAW

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), a part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 416 farmers and farm workers died from a work-related injury in 2017, reflecting 20.4 deaths per 100,000 workers, with tractor rollover deaths being the largest contributor. Public testimony on the bill indicates rollover protection system (ROPS) became a standard feature on tractors beginning in 1985. NIOSH estimates that as of 2014 approximately 62% of tractors in the U.S. were equipped with ROPS. Combined with a seatbelt, ROPS is reported to be 99% effective in preventing serious injury or death as a result of a tractor rollover.

As part of the National ROPS Rebate Program (NRRP), the National Farm Medicine Center (NFMC), located in the City of Marshfield in Marathon and Wood Counties, provides grants for the purchase and installation of ROPS covering 70% (up to \$865) of the cost of purchase and installation of ROPS, for up to one tractor per farm per year. NRRP rebate funding is currently available in Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Funding for NRRP is derived primarily from private donations, with some states, including

Minnesota and New York, allocating state funding. Wisconsin's ROPS program is administered by NFMC and is funded entirely through donations.

SUMMARY OF BILL

AB 31/SB 35 ("the bill") would provide the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) \$250,000 GPR annually to provide grants to organizations that seek to address human health and safety associated with rural and agricultural work, life, and environments. The bill requires that the organization receiving a grant from DATCP expend at least 70% of that funding to support grants that provide reimbursement for 70% of the cost of purchasing and installing ROPS, up to \$1,169 (70% of \$1,670), and 100% of any costs beyond \$1,670. Under the bill the maximum cost to a grantee for purchase and installation of a ROPS would be \$501. The bill would require any organization receiving such a grant to submit to DATCP, each year until funding is depleted, a report that outlines the use of grant funds it receives. It is expected NFMC would apply for this grant, although other entities may also be eligible.

ASSEMBLY/SENATE AMENDMENT 1

The identical AA 1 and SA 1 ("the amendment") would reduce the annual appropriation from \$250,000 to \$150,000. The amendment also would sunset the ROPS grant program after three fiscal years on June 30, 2022, repealing its associated statutory language and funding.

FISCAL EFFECT

Under the bill as introduced, DATCP would be appropriated \$250,000 GPR annually for ROPS grants beginning in 2019-20 on an ongoing basis. Under AA 1/SA 1, \$150,000 GPR annually through the sunset date of June 30, 2022, would result in total appropriations of \$450,000 over three fiscal years.

In a fiscal note accompanying the bill, DATCP reports it would incur costs for program administration. No specific estimate is given. In administering the program, DATCP would likely assign staff and funding supported by the general operations appropriation in its Division of Agricultural Development. During the 2019-21 biennium, DATCP is budgeted approximately \$2.2 million GPR annually with 15.6 GPR positions for agricultural development general operations.

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