

SB 887 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

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Meeting Dates: 3/4, 3/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure directs the Director of the Department of Agriculture to hire an Organic Policy Special Assistant to oversee tracking of national trends and regulations affecting organic agriculture, marketing organic products, facilitating trade, addressing data gaps related to organic products, supporting statewide infrastructure for organic product handling and processing, and integrating organic practices into relevant department programs.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

Revenue impact: No revenue impact.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Organic Policy Special Assistant role and responsibilities
- Organic Policy Special Assistants in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin
- Organic food market

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 amendment clarifies duties of the Organic Policy Special Assistant.

Detailed Summary:

Adds that the Organic Policy Special Assistant shall coordinate the tracking of national trends, policies and regulatory changes that impact the production, marketing or certification of organic agricultural products to advance the organic sector and aid the department in federal and state level advocacy.

Further clarifies that the Organic Policy Special Assistant shall facilitate trade in organic agricultural products, including how to address organic import substitution.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Agriculture's (ODA) National Organic Program (NOP) is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) accredited certifying agent for organic crop production and handling/processing, enforcing federal standards for organically produced agricultural products sold in the United States. ODA's Organic Program staff ensure that NOP regulations are met locally for both crop production and handling.