



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

GARY MCDOWELL
DIRECTOR

VIA E-MAIL

DATE: March 31, 2022

TO: Senate Agriculture Standing Committee Members
House Agriculture Standing Committee Members
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Members
House Appropriations Subcommittee Members
Senate Fiscal Agency
House Fiscal Agency
State Budget Office

FROM: Sylvia Renteria, Director of Finance and Budget

SUBJECT: Section 1001 Agricultural Nutrient Best Management Voluntary Practices Program

In accordance with Section 1001 of 2021 PA 87, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (MDARD) is reporting on the Agricultural Nutrient Best Management Voluntary Practices program.

If any additional information is needed, please contact me at 517-599-3605 or RenteriaS@michigan.gov.

Attachments

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Agricultural Nutrient Best Management Voluntary Practices Program
As of March 31, 2022

Overview

Public act 87 of 2021 appropriates \$25.0 million in one-time general funds for the Agricultural Nutrient Best Management Voluntary Practices pilot program. The program is focused on water quality improvements including a reduction of phosphorus levels in the western Lake Erie basin. Funds may be expended for any of the following:

- Grants, cost sharing, or other incentives for the implementation of priority practices and associated equipment and structures.
- Technical support.
- Soil or water quality testing.
- Education outreach and training.

In addition, section 1001 requires an annual report providing an overview of the progress being made and the fund balance in the program.

Strategic Coordination

The department has facilitated and continues to hold regular meetings with program staff, the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy as well as with the Department of Natural Resources to strategize and develop the framework for effectively implementing these limited resources. It was determined that there are two primary goals; reducing the amount of nutrients being applied to agricultural fields and keeping the applied nutrients on the field for crop usage.

The fiscal year 2022 budget also included one position to oversee and coordinate the implementation of this program. The department has developed a position description and posted the vacant position publicly on February 14th. Interviews and selections will occur over the coming months.

In addition, given the one-time nature of these funds, the department has begun evaluating the funding opportunities to leverage these funds to augment current federal programming options. The department does not intend to compete against existing programs but rather be complementary to them.

Fund Balance

As of March 31, 2022 the program still has an available fund balance of \$25.0 million.

Going Forward

The department will expand coordination efforts to include stakeholders, the agricultural community, legislators, researchers, local units of government, watershed councils, environmental organizations, and many others. In addition, the department will continue to work towards hiring a western Lake Erie Basin coordinator to focus on this program.