

Status updates:

From Legislative report 1/21/22

- No updates to report on House Bill 5674 “Racial Equity and Reparations Fund Act”
- No updates to report on House Bill 5672 “Michigan Strategic Fund Act”
- No updates to report on House Bill 5673
- No updates to report on House Resolution 0205 (Resolution to Address Fertilizer Shortage)

From Legislative report 2/4/22

- No updates to report on Senate Bill 798 “The Revised School Code”
- No updates to report on House Bill 5723

From Legislative report 2/18/22

- No updates to report on House Resolution 222

2/28/22 Legislative Report:

Introduced

Senate Bill 855 (SB 855) 2/23/22

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2021-2022/billintroduced/Senate/pdf/2022-SIB-0885.pdf>

Introduced by Senators VICTORY (R)

LAUWERS (R), LASATA (R), DALEY (R), BUMSTEAD (R), HUIZENGA (R), WOZNIAK (R), BIZON (R), HORN (R), ZORN (R), OUTMAN (R), MCBROOM (R), VANDERWALL (R), MACDONALD (R), and SCHMIDT (R) and referred to the Committee on Appropriations

Purpose: SB 855 is intended to adjust appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022 in order to allocate 1.4 billion dollars for Michigan agriculture and rural development.

Mandates:

- Under SB 855 \$1,415,800,000 billion would be allocated to the expansion of agriculture and rural development in the state of Michigan.
- These funds would include allocations to meet various statewide needs, including:
 - \$350,000,000 for Agriculture infrastructure grants
 - \$350,000,000 Food distribution security and stability grants
 - \$100,000,000 Rural development broadband completion grants
 - \$150,000,000 Agriculture labor housing grants
 - \$10,000,000 Agriculture technical training grants

And other appropriations.

Implications:

- SB 855 has many potential benefits to Hispanic/Latino communities in Michigan, specifically those living in rural areas and migrant farmworkers.

- **SB 885** will invest in access to food, which has been a vital need especially during the pandemic. This provision will benefit those in the community that experience food insecurity.
- **SB 885** will invest in housing *specifically* for agricultural workers. This provision will directly benefit the community, specifically farmworkers.
- **SB 885** will invest in agricultural education and certification programs. This increased accessibility would absolutely benefit agriculture workers across the state.
- **SB 885** will invest in expanded broadband in rural communities that lack access. This could absolutely impact migrant farmworkers; however, there is a question of which “rural communities” this would be allocated to, and it would be important early on to designate specific Michigan migrant farmworker communities as needing access to this provision.

Notes:

- Though **SB 885** has the capacity to benefit Hispanic/Latino communities across the state, there are some areas of concern that would need to be addressed.
- Firstly, **SB 885** is incredibly expansive with many moving parts. The goals of the bill to increase access to food, housing, and education are critically important: however, a specific and detailed plan for each of these parts is critical, and as of yet has not been released.
- Primarily, the necessity of a plan for implementation for each of these goals is to ensure equity. In order to do so, there needs to be a framework for how communities are identified, what the qualifications and stipulations are, and what might present barriers for access.
- *For instance, will there be a citizenship requirement in order to access the housing, internet, or education programs detailed in this bill.
- There is also a question of money allocation; **SB 885** requires significant funds (which will pull funding from other legislative priorities.)
- Additionally, **SB 885** has provisions that include expanded private/public state partnerships within agriculture. This is perhaps not a benefit or concern, but it is significant, as it is important to determine whether this bill is an investment into the education and food-access of rural agricultural communities, or a way of subsidizing private large-scale farming corporations.