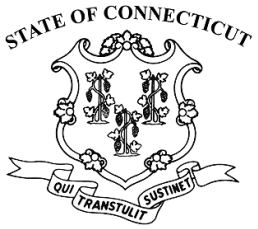

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1497

Public Act No. 25-152

AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAMMING AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND OTHER FARMING AND AGRICULTURE RELATED PROVISIONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 22-26f of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) There shall be a State Veterinarian who shall be an employee of the Department of Agriculture and shall serve as the state animal health official for the state. The Commissioner of Agriculture may designate one or more veterinarians to exercise all or part of the authority, powers and duties of the State Veterinarian. **[**in the absence of the State Veterinarian.**]** Any veterinarian designated by the commissioner pursuant to this subsection shall meet the requirements of subsection (b) of this section. Any designation of a veterinarian made pursuant to this subsection shall be utilized within existing resources and be consistent with the provisions of subsection (c) of section 5-235.

Sec. 2. Section 22-111c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Each brand and grade of fertilizer shall be registered in the name

of the person whose name appears on the label for such fertilizer before being distributed in this state. The application for registration shall be submitted to the commissioner on a form furnished by the commissioner and shall be accompanied by a fee of seventy-five dollars. **[**On and after January 1, 2010, said**]** Said fee shall be established by the commissioner by regulations adopted in accordance with the provisions of section 22-111j, provided such fee does not exceed seventy-five dollars. The application shall include the following information: (1) The net weight; (2) the brand and grade; (3) the guaranteed analysis; and (4) the name and address of the registrant. Upon approval of the application by the commissioner, a copy of the registration shall be furnished to the applicant. All registrations shall expire on June thirtieth of each year.

(b) A distributor shall not be required to register any fertilizer which is already registered under this chapter by another person, provided the label for such exempted fertilizer does not differ in any material respect to such previously registered fertilizer.

(c) A distributor shall not be required to register fertilizer formulated according to specifications which are furnished by a consumer prior to mixing; but shall be required to label such fertilizer as provided in subsection (c) of section 22-111d.

Sec. 3. Section 22-111bb of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) No person may distribute a soil amendment unless it has been registered with the commissioner in accordance with the provisions of this section. An application for registration shall be submitted annually to the commissioner on the form furnished or approved by the commissioner and shall be accompanied by a fee established by the Commissioner of Agriculture that shall not exceed seventy-five dollars. Upon approval of the application by the commissioner, a copy of the

registration shall be furnished to the applicant. Such registration shall expire on September thirtieth of the following year. Each distributor shall submit to the commissioner a copy of labels and any advertising literature for each soil amendment with the registration application.

(b) A distributor shall not be required to register any brand of soil amendment that is already registered under this section by another person, providing the label does not differ in any respect.

(c) Before registering any soil amendment, the commissioner may require evidence to substantiate the claims made for the soil amendment and proof of the value and usefulness of the soil amendment.

Sec. 4. Subsection (b) of section 22-341 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

(b) The town clerk of each town shall order a sufficient number of such tags or plates from the commissioner, who shall furnish the same at **[**a cost of five cents each**]** the cost incurred to procure and distribute such tags or plates, which cost shall be paid by the town on the approval of the town clerk. **[**Any balance of the moneys received by the commissioner after deducting the cost of the tags, the expenses incidental to their distribution to the town clerks and the expenses incidental to the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter, shall be accounted for by the commissioner to the Comptroller.**]** The design and the shape of such tags or plates shall be changed each year, and such tags or plates for each year shall be of uniform design and material throughout the state. Any dog found roaming at large upon any public highway or common or upon the premises of any person other than its owner, without a tag as provided in this section, shall be presumed to be an unlicensed dog.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2026, and applicable to income and*

taxable years commencing on or after January 1, 2026) (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Eligible farmer" means a taxpayer in this state whose federal gross income from farming for the income or taxable year is at least two-thirds of excess federal gross income;

(2) "Excess federal gross income" means the amount of federal gross income from all sources for the income or taxable year in excess of thirty thousand dollars;

(3) "Agricultural production" has the same meaning as provided in subdivision (63) of section 12-412 of the general statutes and includes the production of: (A) Wine from a farm winery licensed pursuant to section 30-16 of the general statutes, (B) Christmas trees, whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump, and (C) apple juice and cider by a farmer who holds both an apple juice and cider manufacturing permit and a farmer tax exemption permit issued pursuant to section 12-412 of the general statutes;

(4) "Farm investment property" means machinery and equipment that are acquired by purchase by an eligible farmer on or after January 1, 2026, and buildings and structural components of buildings that are acquired, constructed, reconstructed or erected by an eligible farmer and placed in service on or after January 1, 2026, and (A) are situated in this state, (B) have a class life of more than four years, as described in Section 168(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as amended from time to time, (C) are acquired by an eligible farmer from a person other than a related person, (D) are not acquired to be leased, and are not leased, to another person or persons during the twelve full months following their acquisition or placement in service, and (E) will be held and used in this state by the eligible farmer in the ordinary course of agricultural production for not less than five full years following the

date of acquisition of such machinery and equipment or the date of placement in service of such buildings;

(5) "Related person" means (A) a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association or trust controlled by the taxpayer, (B) an individual, corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association or trust that is in control of the taxpayer, (C) a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association or trust controlled by an individual, corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association or trust that is in control of the taxpayer, or (D) a member of the same controlled group as the taxpayer; and

(6) "Control" means (A) with respect to a corporation, ownership, directly or indirectly, of stock possessing fifty per cent or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of the stock of such corporation entitled to vote, or (B) with respect to a trust, ownership, directly or indirectly, of fifty per cent or more of the beneficial interest in the principal or income of such trust. The ownership (i) of stock in a corporation, (ii) of a capital or profits interest in a partnership or association, or (iii) of a beneficial interest in a trust shall be determined in accordance with the rules for constructive ownership of stock provided in Section 267(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as amended from time to time, other than paragraph (3) of said section.

(b) A taxpayer, in determining income eligibility for purposes of this section, may use for any income or taxable year the average of the taxpayer's federal gross income from farming for such income or taxable year and the two consecutive income or taxable years immediately preceding.

(c) (1) There shall be allowed a credit against the tax imposed under chapter 208 or 229 of the general statutes, other than the liability imposed by section 12-707 of the general statutes, of twenty per cent of

the amount paid or incurred during an income or a taxable year for farm investment property by a taxpayer that is an eligible farmer.

(2) If the taxpayer is an S corporation or an entity treated as a partnership for federal income tax purposes, the credit may be claimed by the taxpayer's shareholders or partners. If the taxpayer is a single member limited liability company that is disregarded as an entity separate from its owner, the credit may be claimed by such limited liability company's owner, provided such owner is subject to the tax imposed under chapter 208 or 229 of the general statutes.

(3) If the amount of the credit allowed pursuant to this section exceeds the taxpayer's liability for the tax imposed under chapter 208 or 229 of the general statutes, the Commissioner of Revenue Services shall treat such excess as an overpayment and, except as provided in section 12-739 or 12-742 of the general statutes, shall refund the amount of such excess, without interest, to such taxpayer.

(4) No taxpayer claiming the credit under this section with respect to the acquisition of farm investment property may claim a credit against any tax under any other provision of the general statutes with respect to the same acquisition.

(d) If the farm investment property for which a taxpayer has claimed the credit allowed under this section is not held and used in this state in the ordinary course of agricultural production in this state for three full years following its acquisition, the taxpayer shall recapture one hundred per cent of the amount of the credit allowed under this section on its tax return required to be filed for the income or taxable year immediately succeeding the income or taxable year during which such three-year period expires. If the farm investment property for which a taxpayer has claimed the credit allowed under this section is not held and used in this state in the ordinary course of agricultural production in this state for five full years following its acquisition, the taxpayer shall

recapture fifty per cent of the amount of the credit allowed under this section on its tax return required to be filed for the income or taxable year immediately succeeding the income or taxable year during which such five-year period expires. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply if the property that is the subject of the credit under this section is replaced. If any amount of credit required to be recaptured has not been paid to the commissioner on or before the first day of the fourth month next succeeding the end of the income year immediately succeeding the income year during which the three-year or five-year period, as the case may be, expires, such amount shall bear interest at the rate of one per cent per month or fraction thereof from such date to the date of payment.

Sec. 6. Section 12-91 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025, and applicable to assessment years commencing on or after October 1, 2025*):

(a) All farm machinery, except motor vehicles, as defined in section 14-1, to the assessed value of **[**one**]** two hundred fifty thousand dollars, any horse or pony that is actually and exclusively used in farming, as defined in section 1-1, when owned and kept in this state by, or when held in trust for, any farmer or group of farmers operating as a unit, a partnership or a corporation, a majority of the stock of which corporation is held by members of a family actively engaged in farm operations, shall be exempt from local property taxation; provided each such farmer, whether operating individually or as one of a group, partnership or corporation, shall qualify for such exemption in accordance with the standards set forth in subsection (d) of this section for the assessment year for which such exemption is sought. Only one such exemption shall be allowed to each such farmer, group of farmers, partnership or corporation. Subdivision (38) of section 12-81 shall not apply to any person, group, partnership or corporation receiving the exemption provided for in this subsection.

(b) Any municipality, upon approval by its legislative body, may provide an additional exemption from property tax for such machinery to the extent of an additional assessed value of two hundred fifty thousand dollars. Any such exemption shall be subject to the same limitations as the exemption provided under subsection (a) of this section and the application and qualification process provided in subsection (d) of this section.

(c) Any municipality, upon approval by its legislative body, may provide an exemption from property tax for any building used actually and exclusively in farming, as defined in section 1-1, or for any building used to provide housing for seasonal employees of such farmer. The municipality shall establish the amount of such exemption from the assessed value, provided such amount may not exceed five hundred thousand dollars with respect to each eligible building. Such exemption shall not apply to the residence of such farmer and shall be subject to the application and qualification process provided in subsection (d) of this section.

(d) Annually, on or before the first day of November or the extended filing date granted by the assessor pursuant to section 12-42, each such individual farmer, group of farmers, partnership or corporation shall make written application for the exemption provided for in subsection (a) of this section to the assessor or board of assessors in the town in which such farm is located, including therewith a notarized affidavit certifying that such farmer, individually or as part of a group, partnership or corporation, derived at least fifteen thousand dollars in gross sales from such farming operation, or incurred at least fifteen thousand dollars in expenses related to such farming operation, with respect to the most recently completed taxable year of such farmer prior to the commencement of the assessment year for which such application is made, on forms to be prescribed by the Commissioner of Agriculture. Failure to file such application in said manner and form on or before the

first day of November shall be considered a waiver of the right to such exemption for the assessment year. Any person aggrieved by any action of the assessors shall have the same rights and remedies for appeal and relief as are provided in the general statutes for taxpayers claiming to be aggrieved by the doings of the assessors or board of assessment appeals.

Sec. 7. Subsection (e) of section 22a-54 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(e) The following provisions shall govern the certification of aircraft applicators:

(1) No person shall apply, offer to apply or cause to be applied any pesticide or fertilizer by aircraft without a certificate or permit issued in accordance with the provisions of this subsection.

(2) Upon application of any person qualified to fly an aircraft, the commissioner may issue a certificate for the application of pesticides or fertilizers by aircraft. Application for said certificate shall be on forms provided by the commissioner and shall be accompanied by a fee of fifty dollars.

(3) The commissioner may issue a permit to the owner of any crop or land, or to a representative designated by such owner, for application of pesticides or fertilizers by a certified aircraft applicator. Application for said permit shall be on forms provided by the commissioner and shall be accompanied by a fee established by the commissioner by regulations adopted in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 provided the fee shall be not less than twenty dollars. The commissioner may waive the application form and fee requirements imposed pursuant to regulations adopted in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 in circumstances where application of broad spectrum chemical pesticides from the air is necessary to control specific vectors of human disease

which pose an imminent threat to public health. The commissioner may require inspection of the crop or area and its immediate environs and approval as follows:

(A) For agricultural crops, nurseries and orchards, by the director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station;

(B) For rodent control, woodland spraying and mosquito control spraying, by the commissioner;

(C) For control of vectors of human disease, by the Commissioner of Public Health.

(4) The commissioner shall designate the kind and amount of pesticides permitted for use by aircraft. Permits for aircraft spraying in congested areas shall be issued only with the approval of the director of health of the municipality in which the operation is to be conducted except in circumstances where the commissioner determines that the application of broad spectrum chemical pesticides from the air is necessary to control specific vectors of human disease which pose an imminent threat to public health.

(5) (A) The commissioner, with the advice of the Commissioner of Transportation, may adopt such regulations as **[**he deems**]** are necessary for the protection of public health, aquatic and animal life and public and private property, governing:

[(A)**]** (i) The type of aircraft to be used;

[(B)**]** (ii) The hours during which aircraft may be so used;

[(C)**]** (iii) The wind and weather conditions under which aircraft spraying or dusting may be performed;

[(D)**]** (iv) The minimum area on which aircraft spraying or dusting may be done; and

[(E)**]** (v) The amount of public liability and property damage insurance to be carried by the aircraft applicator.

(B) Not later than March 1, 2026, the commissioner shall amend the regulations adopted pursuant to this subdivision to authorize the use of unmanned aircrafts to analyze, treat and apply pesticides and fertilizers to crops and for the planting of seeds by any person who is: (i) Licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration to operate such unmanned aircrafts, and (ii) a licensed commercial or private pesticide applicator.

(6) No person may apply pesticides or fungicides by aircraft or by misting-type devices to shade tobacco crops within three hundred feet of an inhabited residential building for which a certificate of occupancy was issued prior to January 1, 1997, without the written permission of the owner of such building, except spray applications may be administered within the confines of the netting. This subdivision shall not apply to an application of pesticides or fungicides to land which was poled for the cultivation of shade tobacco between January 1, 1994, and January 1, 1997.

Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) Notwithstanding any provision of the State Building Code, the agricultural use of structures commonly referred to as "hoop houses" or "high tunnels" shall not be subject to any permitting or construction standards. For purposes of this subsection, "hoop house" or "high tunnel" means a structure that is used in agricultural applications to provide protected growing space for horticultural crops or livestock and that customarily consists of metal, wood, or polyvinyl chloride pipe framing with a covering for such structure that may consist of polyurethane or polycarbonate material or other covering, while such structure anchors to the ground by pipes or metal rods driven into the soil, which may be individually set in concrete, rather than connecting to a continuous concrete foundation.

Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) There is established the

Farmers' Crop Loss Reimbursement Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture. The purpose of such program shall be to reimburse farmers in the state who incur crop loss attributable to significant acute weather events. The department shall establish the parameters of such grant program, including, but not limited to, (1) eligibility criteria for such farmers, (2) prioritization rules for the use of funds available to said department for such program, (3) maximum reimbursement amounts under such program, (4) designation of significant acute weather events that trigger eligibility for such reimbursement under the program, and (5) the application process for any such reimbursement request.

(b) Upon the development of the parameters of such grant program, the department shall post information concerning such program, including all such parameters, on the department's Internet web site.

Sec. 10. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) (a) For purposes of this section:

(1) "Agriculture" has the same meaning as provided in section 1-1 of the general statutes;

(2) "Agritourism" means any agriculture-related educational, entertainment, historical, cultural or recreational activity, including, but not limited to, you-pick operations, corn mazes, hay rides or farm markets that are conducted on a farm which allows or invites members of the general public to observe or participate in such activity;

(3) "Agritourism provider" means any person who owns, operates, provides or sponsors an agritourism activity or an employee of such a person who engages in or provides agritourism activities, whether or not for a fee;

(4) "Farm" means land that is composed of tracts, lots or parcels that are devoted to agriculture;

(5) "Participant" means any individual, other than the agritourism provider providing such activity, who observes or participates in an agritourism activity; and

(6) "Risk inherent in an agritourism activity" means any danger or condition that is an integral part of an agritourism activity, including each of the following:

(A) The surface and subsurface conditions of land;

(B) The behavior or actions of wild animals not kept by or under the control of an agritourism provider;

(C) The behavior or actions of livestock or domestic animals, other than damage by dogs, as described in section 22-357 of the general statutes;

(D) The ordinary dangers associated with land, structures, animals or equipment ordinarily used in agriculture or agritourism activities;

(E) The possibility of personal injury, property damage or contracting illness from proximity to, or physical contact with structures, equipment, animals, animal feed, farm chemicals or animal waste; or

(F) The possibility that a participant may act in a negligent manner, including by failing to follow instructions given by the agritourism provider or by failing to exercise reasonable care while engaging in the agritourism activity that may contribute to personal injury or property damage to such participant or another participant.

(b) In any civil action, an agritourism provider shall be immune from liability for any personal injury or property damage a participant sustains during an agritourism activity if the participant incurs personal injury or property damage as a result of a risk inherent in an agritourism activity.

(c) An agritourism provider shall not be immune from civil liability for harm sustained by a participant if any of the following applies:

(1) The agritourism provider acts negligently or with a wilful or wanton disregard for the safety of the participant;

(2) The agritourism provider purposefully causes personal injury or property damage to the participant; or

(3) The agritourism provider's actions or inactions constitute criminal conduct and cause personal injury or property damage to the participant.

Sec. 11. Section 26-192k of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

[(a)**]** The Department of Agriculture shall allow the relay of shellfish from shellfish grounds classified as restricted relay to other grounds in accordance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance, as amended from time to time, regarding restricted shellfish relay. **[**The department shall allow the harvest of shellfish from shellfish grounds classified as approved for market on the same day using the same vessel, provided the harvester first harvests the approved market product and lands the product to shore. A harvester shall not begin the relay of shellfish from shellfish grounds classified as restricted relay until all shellfish harvested first from approved market grounds, in market quantities, have been removed from the vessel. Such harvester shall not begin such relay until after the harvester has notified the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection of such relay. The harvester shall provide all information required by the Department of Agriculture regarding shellfish relays to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection at the time of such notification. For the remainder of the day, the harvester shall not harvest approved market shellfish after beginning such relay.

(b) All tag identification information regarding shellfish harvest locations shall be confidential, provided the harvester of the shellfish marks the tag with a unique code corresponding to the shellfish harvest location. The Department of Agriculture shall provide such harvester and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection with a written code key detailing the harvest location and corresponding code to be used by the harvester.**]**

Sec. 12. Section 26-212 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

No person shall take or gather for commercial purposes oysters, clams, mussels or other molluscan shellfish from any natural shellfish bed in the state in any boat or vessel unless it is licensed and numbered in the manner provided in this section. Any person desiring to use any boat or vessel for such purpose may make written application to the Commissioner of Agriculture, stating the name, owner, rig, general description and tonnage of such boat or vessel and the place where it is owned, and the commissioner shall issue to the owner of such boat or vessel a license to take and gather for commercial purposes oysters, clams, mussels or other molluscan shellfish from the natural shellfish beds in the state for the term expiring on the next succeeding **[**twentieth day of July**]** thirtieth day of June, unless sooner revoked, upon the payment of thirty dollars; provided, before such license is granted, the owner or master shall prove to the satisfaction of the commissioner that such boat or vessel may legally be used on work on the public beds of the state and that the dredges and other contrivances do not weigh more than thirty pounds. Each boat or vessel so licensed shall, while at work upon any of the natural shellfish beds of the state, display the number of such license in black figures not less than one foot in length. No such license may be transferred. The sale of any boat so licensed shall operate as a forfeiture and revocation of the license, and the license certificate shall be surrendered to the commissioner.

Sec. 13. Section 26-213 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

No person shall take or gather for commercial purposes oysters, clams, mussels or other molluscan shellfish from any natural shellfish bed in the state and no person shall be permitted upon any boat, licensed pursuant to the provisions of section 26-212, as amended by this act, while the boat is being used for such taking or gathering until the person has been licensed in the manner provided in this section. The person shall apply in writing, to the Commissioner of Agriculture upon blanks to be furnished by the commissioner, stating his name, residence and post-office address and such other information as may be required by said commissioner, and said commissioner, upon payment of a fee of twenty dollars, shall issue to the person a license for such purpose. All licenses so issued shall be revocable at any time by the commissioner and shall expire on the **[**twentieth day of July**]** thirtieth day of June in each year. The commissioner shall account to the Treasurer for all moneys received for licenses under the provisions of this section. Any person who violates any of the provisions of this section relating to licensing shall be guilty of a class D misdemeanor.

Sec. 14. Section 26-232 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Any person who (1) between the **[**twentieth day of July**]** fifteenth day of June and the twentieth day of September, gathers or takes any oysters or shells from any natural oyster bed specified in section 26-193 other than any such bed in the Housatonic River, (2) between the **[**twentieth day of July**]** fifteenth day of June and the twentieth day of September in any year, gathers or takes any oysters or shells in the Saugatuck River, or (3) between the **[**twentieth day of July**]** fifteenth day of June and the twentieth day of October in any year, gathers or takes any oysters or shells in the Housatonic River shall be fined not more than two hundred fifty dollars; provided nothing in this section shall be

construed to prohibit the gathering or taking of shells or mussels by the use of tongs in said Housatonic River below a line drawn from a stake on the west bank of said river, at Quimber's Neck Point, so called, and running thence in a northeasterly direction to a stake on the east side of said river. Said stakes shall be located and maintained at said points by the selectmen of the town of Stratford, and a certificate of such location by said selectmen shall be recorded in the office of the town clerk of said town of Stratford. Nothing in this chapter or in chapter 492 shall be construed as prohibiting the excavation of material in deepening the channels of navigable waters by work authorized by the United States government.

(b) The Commissioner of Agriculture, upon application of the Stratford Shellfish Commission, may, at any time, close the season for the taking of any shellfish in the Housatonic River for purposes of conserving the resource.

Sec. 15. Section 26-207 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Any owner of shellfish grounds, franchise or franchises lying within the exclusive jurisdiction of the state, on or before the first day of July, annually, shall deliver to the Commissioner of Agriculture a statement under oath of such franchise or franchises or grounds belonging to such owner on the first day of June next preceding. Such statement shall specify the lot or lots owned by such owner by numbers as appear upon the last official map published by said commissioner, or, if granted since the publication of such map, according to such number as may be furnished by said commissioner, and the location and number of acres of each lot. Blanks for such statement shall be prepared by said commissioner and furnished to each owner, but failure to receive such blanks shall not relieve any person from the obligation to furnish the statement herein provided for. The commissioner may issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of any person before him, with books of

account, documents and maps, and may administer oaths to and examine any person for the purpose of ascertaining the amount and value of such property. Any person who fails to respond to any such subpoena or who, having responded, refuses to testify or who fails to produce any such book or books of account, documents or maps, upon application of said commissioner to the superior court for any judicial district bordering on the waters of Long Island Sound, may be punished for contempt. Said commissioner may exercise the authority of assessors of towns and add ten per cent of the value of the property as a penalty for failure to give in a list. Any person who discloses any information obtained from any such witness or from the books or records of any such owner provided for under the provisions of this section, otherwise than in carrying out the provisions hereof, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars. Any owner of any shellfish grounds or franchise lying within the exclusive jurisdiction of the state shall certify, in a format determined by the Commissioner of Agriculture, that the owner completed all required business and shellfish-related state tax filings for the preceding year.

Sec. 16. Section 26-209 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Any person aggrieved by the action of the Commissioner of Agriculture under section 26-207, as amended by this act, or 26-208 shall have the same right of appeal to the Superior Court as is provided by law for appeals to said court from boards of assessment appeals of towns, except as otherwise provided. Each such appeal shall be taken to the judicial district where the franchise or ground in question is situated or to the judicial district where the owner appealing resides, and said court shall have such powers therein as in appeals from boards of assessment appeals of towns.

Sec. 17. Section 26-215 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) There shall not be used on any licensed boat any device operated otherwise than by hand power, for hoisting or operating dredges or other implements for gathering oysters, clams, mussels or other shellfish or oyster shells. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, no person shall use any dredge or other contrivance weighing more than **[**thirty**]** sixty pounds, exclusive of the net or bag, or with a capacity of more than one and one-half bushels in taking up or dredging for oysters, clams, mussels or other shellfish or oyster shells in any of the waters of the state, except upon private designated grounds. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the use of power in taking up or dredging for oysters, clams, mussels or other shellfish or shells on private designated grounds by the owners thereof, or to prevent the use of excavators for deepening the water in places where there are no natural oyster or clam beds, or where such beds have not existed within ten years, by digging or removing the material, permission to use excavators being first given by the Commissioner of Agriculture, which permission shall not be given until after a public notice of at least two weeks of the time when and place where he will hear all parties desiring to be heard upon such application, which notice shall be posted in the office of the town clerk of the town where such grounds are located.

(b) A local shellfish commission established pursuant to section 26-257a may allow limited and supervised use of a power dredge or other contrivance with a capacity of not more than three bushels, for the purpose of cultivation, enhancement or restoration of natural shellfish beds located within the jurisdiction of said commission. The use of a power dredge or other contrivance pursuant to this subsection shall not be extended to the harvesting or removal of oysters. Such shellfish commission shall administer such dredging pursuant to section 26-257a.

Sec. 18. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) There is established the Manure Management Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture. The purpose of such program shall be to support farmers

in adopting best practices to maintain manure management systems. The department shall establish the parameters of such grant program, including, but not limited to: (1) Eligibility criteria for such farmers, (2) prioritization rules for the use of funds available to the department for such program, (3) maximum reimbursement amounts under such program, and (4) the application process for said grant program.

(b) Upon the development of the parameters of such grant program, the department shall post information concerning such program, including all such parameters, on the department's Internet web site.

Sec. 19. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the environment may conduct an informational hearing for the purpose of obtaining information on the funding and administration of the following programs: (1) The CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program described in section 10-215*l* of the general statutes, (2) the local food for schools incentive program established in section 10-215m of the general statutes, and (3) the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program. The Commissioner of Agriculture shall testify at any such informational hearing and answer questions of members of the committee concerning such programs.

Sec. 20. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Department of Agriculture shall administer a program for the purpose of providing grants for the purchase and operation of shipping container farms to be used in multiple locations to grow fresh vegetables for schools and local food pantries. Such program may be administered as part of any other department program for which schools and food pantries are eligible.

Sec. 21. Subsection (a) of section 22a-903c of the general statutes is amended by adding subdivisions (30) and (31) as follows (*Effective from passage*):

(NEW) (30) "Soil amendment" has the same meaning as provided in section 22-111aa.

(NEW) (31) "Fertilizer" has the same meaning as provided in section 22-111b.

Sec. 22. Subsections (f) and (g) of section 22a-903c of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(f) No person shall use, sell or offer for sale in this state **[**as**]** any fertilizer intended for land application or **[**a**]** soil amendment that contains any biosolids or wastewater sludge that contain PFAS.

(g) (1) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may enforce the provisions of this section pursuant to section 22a-6, except the Commissioner of Agriculture shall enforce subsection (f) of this section for fertilizers pursuant to chapter 427a and for soil amendments pursuant to chapter 427b. The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection **[**may**]** shall coordinate with the Commissioners of Agriculture, Consumer Protection and Public Health in enforcing this section.

(2) Upon written request by **[**the department**]** either the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection or the Department of Agriculture, as applicable, a certificate of compliance, or copies thereof, stating that a product, fertilizer or soil amendment is in compliance with the requirements of this section shall be furnished by the product's, fertilizer's or soil amendment's manufacturer or supplier to **[**the**]** such department. When requested by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection or the Commissioner of Agriculture, as applicable, any person shall furnish to **[**the**]** such commissioner any information that the person may have or may reasonably obtain that is relevant to show compliance with the provisions of this section.

(3) Any such certificate of compliance shall be signed by an authorized official of the manufacturer or supplier. A certificate of compliance shall be kept on file by the manufacturer or supplier of the product, fertilizer or soil amendment. A manufacturer or supplier may make the certificate of compliance available on the manufacturer's or supplier's Internet web site or through an authorized representative of the manufacturer or supplier, including a multijurisdictional clearinghouse.

Sec. 23. Section 26-192*l* of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective from passage*)

Governor's Action:
Approved July 1, 2025