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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FOURTH SESSION

H. F. No. 1540

02/26/2025 Authored by Tabke and Bakeberg The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to agriculture; establishing a residency pilot program for certain racehorses;
1.3 requiring awards and grants; transferring money; appropriating money; proposing
1.4 coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 17.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. [17.4595] THOROUGHBRED RACEHORSE RESIDENCY, AFTERCARE,
1.7 AND BENEVOLENCE PILOT PROGRAM.

1.8 Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have
1.9 the meanings given.

1.10 (b) "Account" means the thoroughbred racehorse pilot program account established in
1.11 subdivision 7.

1.12 (c) "Racetrack" means a class A racetrack that primarily conducts thoroughbred and
1.13 quarter horse racing and is licensed by the Minnesota Racing Commission under chapter
1.14 240.

1.15 (d) "Racing day" and "racing season" have the meanings given in section 240.01.

1.16 Subd. 2. Establishment. The commissioner of agriculture must establish and administer
1.17 a thoroughbred racehorse residency, aftercare, and benevolence pilot program to stimulate
1.18 the state's agricultural and equine industries and support the mental health and education
1.19 of racetrack stable workers and their local communities.

1.20 Subd. 3. Minnesota resident thoroughbred registry. (a) Beginning in calendar year
1.21 2025, the commissioner of agriculture must compile and maintain a voluntary registry of
1.22 thoroughbred racehorses that resided at a racetrack for at least 120 days during the previous

2.1 calendar year. Once registered under this subdivision, a thoroughbred racehorse's registration
2.2 does not expire.

2.3 (b) No later than February 15 each year, the owner of a thoroughbred racehorse seeking
2.4 initial registration under this section must apply to the commissioner of agriculture in the
2.5 form required by the commissioner. Each applicant must pay a nonrefundable application
2.6 fee of \$100 and demonstrate to the commissioner's satisfaction that the thoroughbred
2.7 racehorse satisfied the residency requirement under paragraph (a) during the previous
2.8 calendar year. The commissioner must deposit application fees collected under this
2.9 subdivision in the account.

2.10 Subd. 4. **Residency awards.** (a) In calendar years 2026 and 2027, by the end of each
2.11 racing day, a racetrack must award \$750 to the current owner of a thoroughbred racehorse
2.12 registered under this section if the registered thoroughbred racehorse started a race at the
2.13 racetrack that racing day.

2.14 (b) No later than November 15, 2026, and November 15, 2027, the commissioner of
2.15 agriculture must fully reimburse a racetrack for each award issued under paragraph (a)
2.16 during the previous racing season. A racetrack must apply to the commissioner for
2.17 reimbursement in the form required by the commissioner.

2.18 Subd. 5. **Repurposing grants.** Beginning in calendar year 2026, the commissioner of
2.19 agriculture must award grants to national thoroughbred accredited organizations,
2.20 organizations approved by the Minnesota Racing Commission, and college and university
2.21 equine programs based in this state to provide retraining or repurposing services for retired
2.22 thoroughbred racehorses registered under this section.

2.23 Subd. 6. **Mental health and education grants.** Beginning in calendar year 2026, the
2.24 commissioner of agriculture must award grants to organizations that develop or deliver
2.25 mental health and educational services to the stable workers of a racetrack or to others in
2.26 the racetrack's local community.

2.27 Subd. 7. **Account; appropriation.** (a) A thoroughbred racehorse pilot program account
2.28 is established in the agricultural fund.

2.29 (b) Money in the account, including interest, is appropriated to the commissioner of
2.30 agriculture for grants and residency awards under this section. Of the amount appropriated
2.31 each year, the commissioner of agriculture must allocate at least \$500,000 for repurposing
2.32 grants under subdivision 5 and at least \$500,000 for mental health and education grants
2.33 under subdivision 6.

3.1 (c) Application fee revenue collected by the commissioner of agriculture under
3.2 subdivision 3 and deposited in the account is appropriated to the commissioner of agriculture
3.3 for purposes of administering this section.

3.4 Subd. 8. **Expiration.** This section expires July 1, 2028.

3.5 **Sec. 2. TRANSFER.**

3.6 \$7,000,000 in fiscal year 2026 is transferred from the general fund to the thoroughbred
3.7 racehorse pilot program account in the agricultural fund. This is a onetime transfer.