

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND THIRTEEN

—
H.P. 284 - L.D. 409

Resolve, To Establish a Veteran-to-farmer Training Pilot Program

Sec. 1. Veteran-to-farmer training pilot program. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, in consultation with the agriculture program at Kennebec Valley Community College, the Maine Apprenticeship Program in the Department of Labor, the Finance Authority of Maine and the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Veterans' Services, shall design a veteran-to-farmer training pilot program to enable veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States to develop necessary skills in farming while also addressing the difficulties some veterans face in their transition back to civilian life after military service. The pilot program designed under this resolve must:

1. Use existing programs and resources to the extent possible;
2. Establish a certificate program that provides a hands-on farming skills training curriculum, classroom-based business training, business start-up support and health monitoring for veterans; and
3. Enable veterans, upon completion of the certificate program under subsection 2, to create new farm businesses and to meet the requirements to acquire the leases and loans needed to farm.

After its design, the curriculum for the pilot program must be submitted to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for approval in order to allow eligible veterans to use education benefits available pursuant to the federal Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, as amended, for participation in the certificate program; and be it further

Sec. 2. Report. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension shall jointly submit a report, including findings and recommendations, on the pilot program designed under section 1 to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs no later than January 10, 2014. The joint standing committee may report out a bill related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 126th Legislature.