

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023**

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SENATE BILL 237

Short Title: Ag Cost-Share Funds/French Broad. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Mayfield, Moffitt, and Corbin (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Appropriations/Base Budget

March 9, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO SUPPORT LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER BASIN.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) Findings and Purpose. – The General Assembly finds that farmer requests for funding from the Agriculture Cost Share Program managed by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts significantly exceeded appropriations in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, and that further protective actions are necessary in the Upper French Broad River basin to address bacterial contamination and sedimentation issues that contributed to the designation of 19 miles of that waterbody as impaired by the Department of Environmental Quality in 2022. The purpose of this act is to create a pilot program to assist farmers in reducing impacts from grazing livestock and mitigating the resulting bacteriological and sedimentation impacts on the Upper French Broad River.

SECTION 1.(b) Grant Program Established. – The sum of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year is appropriated from the General Fund to the Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control established in Article 72 of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes. These funds will be used to provide cost share assistance to farmers engaged in farming in the watershed of the Upper French Broad River in Transylvania, Henderson, Buncombe, and Madison Counties for the installation of fences, alternative livestock watering systems, pasture management, and other measures deemed appropriate by the local Soil and Water Conservation District to keep livestock out of existing streams and watercourses that constitute or drain into the Upper French Broad River.

SECTION 1.(c) Requirements and Limitations. – Grants from the funds appropriated by this act are subject to the following requirements and limitations:

- (1) All requirements and limitations set forth in G.S. 106-850(b), except the description of eligible measures in G.S. 106-850(b)(5).
- (2) In addition, applicants must demonstrate that the measures for which they seek cost share assistance would mitigate or prevent stream impacts from livestock in or adjacent to surface waters in the Upper French Broad River basin.

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2023.

