

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Authors: Juhnke

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Analyst: Colbey Sullivan, Jim Cleary

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Overview

This bill appropriates funding for fiscal year 2009 for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Board of Animal Health (BAH), the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

Policy changes recommended by the Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Finance Division are contained in a separate bill, HF3902.

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Article 1: Supplemental Appropriations

Overview

This article contains supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2009 for the Department of Agriculture, Board of Animal Health, and Department of Veterans Affairs.

Unless otherwise stated, the amounts listed are for fiscal year 2009, and are added to the base appropriation for fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

1 Technical boilerplate language.

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2 Department of Agriculture (MDA).

Totals: Reduction of \$200,000 in FY08. Appropriates \$2,143,000 in FY09.

\$302,000 reduction for administration, agricultural marketing, and efficiencies from the merger of two divisions;

\$2,385,000 is a onetime appropriation, available until expended, for grants to livestock producers via the livestock investment grant program in MS §17.118 , if enacted ;

\$200,000 is a cancelled FY2008 appropriation for a grant to the Elk River Economic Development Authority for a bio-energy project;

\$60,000 is a onetime appropriation for a grant to the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars for an agricultural renewable energy internship pilot program;

\$310,000 for ethanol producer payments is cancelled and reappropriated for ground water monitoring activities. This base is further reduced in the next biennium to reflect the end of payments to a bankrupt ethanol producer , as required by a provision in the policy portion of this bill .

3 Board of Animal Health (BAH).

Totals: Appropriates \$472,000 in FY08 and \$ 5,562,000 in FY09.

These amounts are for monitoring, testing, eradication, and education and outreach, as required of the board to comply with federal regulations concerning cattle, bison, goats, and farmed cervidae under a USDA modified status. All but \$310,000 of the FY09 amount is added to the base.

\$12,000 is for a onetime grant to a beef cattle producer to be paid from a prior appropriation .

4 Veterans Affairs (MDVA).

Subd. 1. Totals: Reduction of \$5,250,000 in FY08; appropriates \$1,357,000 in FY09.

Subd. 2. Purpose.

\$500,000 for grants to county veteran service offices (under same 2007 program), report required;

\$3,500,000 for the state soldiers assistance program; of this amount, \$2,000,000 is added to the base; available until spent; report required;

\$1,000,000 for casework services for veterans; must solicit competitive bids; the services should be community-based, available statewide, and include in-home counseling; report

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required;

\$220,000 for the department's LinkVET phonenumber services; must combine LinkVET with the higher ed call center for veterans;

\$250,000 for the Veterans Claims Office for outreach and training and to hire a female veterans service officer/coordinator;

\$50,000 for designing a traumatic brain injury (TBI) treatment program in the state veterans homes; report required;

\$250,000 for a grant to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) for serving homeless veterans and their families; report required;

\$200,000 is a onetime appropriation for: 1) a strategic planning study for the state veterans homes, with special emphasis on exploring alternative models for the Minneapolis veterans home; and 2) a study of the feasibility of partnering for home-based services for veterans with nonprofit and faith-based social service and healthcare delivery organizations;

rider: no staff may be hired for or allocated to any new veterans cemetery without explicit legislative approval;

rider: veterans cemetery – shifting all funding in the permanent trust account to the permanent development and maintenance account;

\$1,000,000 reduction for the veterans homes board; base appropriation in fiscal years 2010 and 2011 is reduced by \$1,320,000 each year;

\$600,000 for the Minnesota GI Bill program; base is increased by \$800,000 in each of fiscal years 2010 and 2011;

\$5,250,000 reduction in fiscal year 2008, and \$5,000,000 reduction in fiscal year 2009, is from the Minnesota GI Bill program created and funded by the 2007 Legislature;

\$100,000 is a onetime appropriation for a grant to the Minnesota Ambulance Association to implement a veterans paramedic apprenticeship program for reintegrating returning Minnesota military medics;

\$25,000 is a onetime appropriation for a pilot program for peer-to-peer counseling among combat veterans; report required;

\$1,000,000 is a onetime appropriation for improvements to the medication distribution system in the Minnesota veterans homes; report required;

\$338,000 is a reduction from the special revenue fund appropriation, which is replaced in the policy bill by a standing appropriation, split equally between veterans affairs and

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5 military affairs; the base appropriation is reduced to \$0 in fiscal years 2010 and 2011.
Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

Total: \$1,000,000 is appropriated in fiscal year 2009.

\$500,000 for a new program for making military reservist economic injury loans to small businesses that have suffered financially due to the deployment of a National Guard or reserve member who is the owner or another vital employee of the business (if program language is enacted);

\$500,000 for expenditures related to veterans who are dislocated workers.

Article 2: Related Provisions

1 **A appropriation; transfers.** Authorizes the Governor to make emergency funding available from the general contingent appropriation to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in order to promptly respond to an invasive tree pest outbreak.

2 **Subd. 1. World War II Memorial Donation Match Account.** Adds statutory language to appropriate money remaining in the WWII memorial donation matching account after construction costs are paid, to the MDVA for veterans services and programs.

3 **Standing appropriation created.** Statutory language is added to create a standing appropriation for money deposited in the special "Support our Troops Account" from sales of the special license plates. Money in the account will be permanently appropriated in equal shares to the departments of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) and Military Affairs (DMA).

4 **Permissible purposes defined.** Authorizes the MDVA to spend "Support our Troops" license plate money for: 1) grants to veterans service organizations (e.g., the VFW, American Legion, DAV, etc.); and 2) outreach to underserved veterans.

5 **Flexible spending authorized.** Permits an appropriation for the state soldiers assistance fund for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to be spent in either year, if available.

6 **Discontinuation of ethanol producer payments.** Prohibits the MDA from paying \$0.07/gallon ethanol deficiency payments to Gopher State Ethanol, an ethanol producer that ceased operations and declared bankruptcy in 2004.