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**HOUSE BILL NO. 2303**

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 8, 2025

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 3.2-5901.2, relating to State Veterinarian; large animal veterinary grant program; report.*

Patrons—Lopez and Thomas

Referred to Committee on Appropriations

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 3.2-5901.2 as follows:**

**§ 3.2-5901.2. State Veterinarian; large animal veterinary grant program.**

*A. As used in this section:*

*"Large animal veterinarian" means a person who is actively engaged in and is licensed to practice veterinary medicine pursuant to Chapter 38 (§ 54.1-3800 et seq.) of Title 54.1 and whose specialties include livestock, poultry, or equine, as that term is defined in § 3.2-6200.*

*"Program" means the large animal veterinary grant program established by the State Veterinarian pursuant to subsection B.*

*B. The State Veterinarian shall establish a large animal veterinary grant program to provide grants to increase or stabilize the number of large animal veterinarians practicing in areas of the Commonwealth that have been identified by the State Veterinarian as having a shortage of such veterinarians. The State Veterinarian shall annually select from a pool of applicants no more than four large animal veterinarians to participate in the program.*

*C. The State Veterinarian, in consultation with the Board of Veterinary Medicine and relevant stakeholders, including the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, the Virginia Academy of Food Animal Practitioners, and the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, shall develop criteria for applicants to participate in the program, which shall include:*

*1. The geographic area of the Commonwealth that an applicant serves or would serve and the need for large animal veterinary services in such area;*

*2. The number of localities that an applicant serves or would serve;*

*3. The number of different large animal veterinarian specialties in which an applicant practices; and*

*4. The percentage of time an applicant devotes to large animal veterinary services.*

**2. That the State Veterinarian shall establish the large animal veterinary grant program pursuant to § 3.2-5901.2 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, no later than July 1, 2026.**

**3. That the State Veterinarian shall submit a report evaluating the extent to which the large animal veterinary grant program created pursuant to § 3.2-5901.2 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, has helped to address the shortage of large animal veterinarians in the Commonwealth. Such report shall be submitted to the Board of Veterinary Medicine and the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources no later than July 1, 2030.**

INTRODUCED

HB2303