

# **TOBACCO SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT FUND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes**

**May 22, 2025**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The first meeting of the Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee was held on May 22, 2025, at 2:00 PM in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Jason Howell, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Representative Michael Sarge Pollock, Co-Chair; Senator Jason Howell, Co-Chair; Senators Keturah Herron, Aaron Reed, Craig Richardson, and Robin L. Webb; Representatives Myron Dossett, Daniel Fister, Erika Hancock, Kim King, Shawn McPherson, and Rachel Roarx.

Guests: Brandon Reed, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy (KOAP); and Bill McCloskey, Deputy Executive Director, KOAP.

LRC Staff: Stefan Kasacavage, Hillary Abbott, Kelly Ludwig, Rachel Hartley, and Phillip Combes.

### **Election of Co-Chairs**

Representative Fister made a motion to nominate Representative Pollock and Representative McPherson seconded. Representative Pollock was elected Co-Chair.

Senator Richardson made a motion to nominate Senator Howell and Senator Reed seconded. Senator Howell was elected Co-Chair.

### **Approval of minutes for the meeting of December 19, 2024**

A motion to approve the December meeting minutes was made by Representative McPherson and seconded by Representative Roarx. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

### **Report on the projects considered for funding by the Agricultural Development Board**

Brandon Reed, Executive Director, KOAP, thanked the General Assembly for its passage of Senate Bill 28 from the 2025 Regular Session and provided a brief overview of its implementation. Mr. Reed also updated the committee on various events and site visits.

From December 2024 to April 2025, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) approved \$14 million in funds, and the Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation approved \$11.9 million in funds.

Bill McCloskey, Deputy Executive Director, KOAP, highlighted the following projects approved by KADB:

- Cowan Community Action Group, Inc. was approved for \$251,000 in state and Letcher County funds to build a farmers market pavilion.
- Community Farm Alliance, Inc. was approved for \$868,008 in state funds over a two-year period to continue support for nutrition incentives, increase access to local food and low-income populations, and to leverage federal funds to support the food and farming systems in Kentucky.
- Metcalfe County 4-H Council, Inc. was approved for \$2,063 in Metcalfe County funds to purchase 40 hams for 4-H members to participate in the country ham project.
- Hopkinsville Elevator Company, Inc. was approved for \$300,000 in multi-county funds to renew, expand, and develop rail accessibility.
- W & W Veterinary Services, PLLC was approved for \$66,241 in state and Madison County funds to make upgrades to its large animal handling facility as a part of the Large & Food Animal Veterinary Incentives Program.

Mr. Reed stated on June 20, 2025, there will be a celebration of the 25-year anniversary of the passage of House Bill 611 that allocated funding from the tobacco settlement agreement fund for agricultural development programs at the Kentucky History Center.

Representative Dossett commended the Hopkinsville Elevator project and stated the benefits it will provide to western Kentucky.

Senator Webb emphasized the importance of the committee and welcomed new members.

In response to Representative King, Mr. Reed stated initiatives from the “Make America Healthy Again” campaign have not been outlined and he is unsure how it will impact Kentucky’s already proactive approach to nutrition programs, including the Kentucky

Department of Agriculture's "Food is Medicine" initiative in partnership with the Kentucky Hospital Association.

In response to Representative Roarx, Mr. McCloskey stated the application from Grow Farms, LLC in Jefferson County was denied. The applicant and KADB could not agree on the performance structure of the loan. Mr. McCloskey is unsure if the project is going forward.

In response to Senator Howell, Mr. Reed stated all applications for funds are reviewed by KADB and its guidelines are updated annually.

Representative McPherson provided a brief background of his experiences with KADB and commended the KOAP staff.

Representative Pollock highlighted the Metcalfe County 4-H ham project and spoke briefly about its benefits to young people.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.