

# **TOBACCO SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT FUND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes**

**July 11, 2024**

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

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee was held on July 11, 2024, at 10:30 AM in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Representative Myron Dossett Co-Chair; Senator Amanda Mays Bledsoe Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Matthew Deneen, and Robin L. Webb; Representatives George Brown Jr., Kim King, Shawn McPherson, Phillip Pratt, and Rachel Roarx.

Guests: Brandon Reed, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy (KOAP); Bill McCloskey, Deputy Executive Director, KOAP; Myrisa Christy, Executive Director, Community Farm Alliance; Kimmie Ishmael, Policy Campaign Coordinator, Community Farm Alliance; Jamie Fitzwater, Director, Kentucky Double Dollars.

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

### **Approval of minutes for the meeting of June 13, 2024**

A motion to approve the June meeting minutes was made by Senator Raque Adams and seconded by Senator Deneen. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

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

Brandon Reed stated Commissioner Shell signed a proclamation recognizing the month of June as dairy month.

For June, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) approved \$8.5 million in funds and the Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation (KAFC) approved \$3.3 million in funds.

Bill McCloskey highlighted the following projects approved by the KADB:

- AppleAtcha Agritech KY, LLC was approved for \$3.5 million in the form of a participation loan to expand their apple orchard.
- Green County Board of Education was approved for \$15,000 in Green County funds to build a greenhouse at the local high school.
- Jemstar Properties, LLC was approved for \$15,000 in Montgomery County funds as a cost-reimbursement grant, \$250,000 in state funds as a forgivable loan, and \$1 million in the form of a participation loan. The project supports the construction of a meat processing facility in Mount Sterling.

Senator Webb commended the KADB for investing funds in projects in eastern Kentucky.

### **Update from Community Farm Alliance and Kentucky Double Dollars**

Myrisa Christy stated the Community Farm Alliance (CFA) was awarded \$1.1 million from a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program to support the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Kentucky Double Dollars (KDD). CFA was awarded \$1 million over five years from the Appalachian Regional Food Business Center to continue farmers market support activities.

CFA has been successful in on-boarding 10 new farmers markets that will accept SNAP benefits. In Jefferson County, Save-A-Lot has been adding local produce in their stores and has sold out every week. In 2023, there were 55 farmers markets, 14 fresh stop and community markets, and 3 retail locations in Kentucky. From 2020 to 2023, 84 percent of the farms surveyed attributed increased sales to KDD.

CFA's goal for the Farmers Market Support Program is to create profitable markets for farmers so members of their communities can have access to fresh food. In 2024, there are 37 markets participating. CFA would like to expand the Fresh Rx for Moms program, which currently offers fruits and vegetables to expectant mothers on Medicaid, to offer proteins as well.

In response to Representative McPherson, Ms. Christy stated some farmers in Kentucky have been very successful with the programs offered by CFA and have moved from selling in farmers markets to the retail market.

In response to Representative Roarx, Ms. Fitzwater stated there are two Save-A-Lot's in Louisville that are adding local produce. They are located on Portland Avenue and Taylor Boulevard.

In response to Representative Dossett, Ms. Christy stated there was a significant increase in farmers market sales in 2020 since more people had access to SNAP benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024, CFA will survey people shopping at farmers markets to determine demographics of shoppers, shopping habits, and long-term eating behaviors. Ms. Ishmael stated the USDA did a study to measure the percentage of SNAP participants at farmers markets for each state and from 2013 to 2020 there was a 123 percent increase in Kentucky. Ms. Fitzwater stated the KDD has a small marketing budget, but they have increased their social media presence and have redesigned their website to make it more user-friendly.

In response to Senator Webb, Ms. Fitzwater stated the KDD has worked with family resources centers in Kentucky.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.