

# **Legislature - First Session - 2019**

## **Introducer's Statement of Intent**

### **LB243**

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**Chairperson: Senator Steve Halloran**

**Committee: Agriculture**

**Date of Hearing: January 29, 2019**

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

The purpose of LB 243 is to promote more widespread use of healthy soil practices among farm and ranch landowners and operators in Nebraska in order to improve the health, yield and profitability of the soil, increase its carbon sequestration capacity, and improve water quality.

LB 243 proposes to create the Healthy Soils Task Force. The task force is to consist of the Director of the Department of Agriculture or his designee and the following members appointed by the Governor: 2 representatives of NRDs, 2 academic experts in agriculture and natural resources, 5 representatives from production agriculture, 2 representatives from agribusiness and 1 representative from an environmental organization. The chairs of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committees shall serve as nonvoting members.

The Healthy Soils Task Force is to develop a comprehensive healthy soils initiative, as well as develop an action plan to carry out the initiative using specified standards as measures to assess improved soil health. With the assistance from outside resources, the task force shall examine how to provide farmers with research, education, technical assistance, and demonstration projects; examine options for financial incentives to improve soil health; and examine the contribution of livestock to soil health. The task force is to create a timeline to improve soil health within 5 years after completion of the action plan.

The task force shall submit its action plan, as well as their findings and recommendations, by January 1, 2021.

**Principal Introducer:** \_\_\_\_\_

Senator Tim Gragert