

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1551**

Introduced by

Representatives Headland, Beltz, Holle, Brandenburg

Senators Cory, Erbele, Wanzek

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new chapter to title 4.1 of the North Dakota Century  
2 Code, relating to regulation of biostimulants and beneficial substances; and to provide a penalty.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1.** A new chapter to title 4.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and  
5 enacted as follows:

6 **Definitions.**

- 7 1. "Beneficial substance" means a substance or compound, other than primary,  
8 secondary, or microplant nutrients, but excluding pesticides, demonstrated by scientific  
9 research to be beneficial to one or more species of plants, soil, or media.
- 10 2. "Brand" means a term, designation, trademark, product name, or other specific  
11 designation under which an individual beneficial substance is offered for sale.
- 12 3. "Bulk" means products in nonpackaged form.
- 13 4. "Distribute" means to import, consign, manufacture, produce, compound, mix, or blend  
14 beneficial substances, or offer for sale, sell, barter, or otherwise supply beneficial  
15 substances in the state.
- 16 5. "Distributor" means a person that imports, consigns, manufactures, produces,  
17 compounds, mixes, or blends beneficial substances, or offers for sale, sells, barter, or  
18 otherwise supplies beneficial substances in the state.
- 19 6. "Label" means the display of all written, printed, or graphic matter upon the immediate  
20 container or statement accompanying a beneficial substance.
- 21 7. "Official sample" means any sample of a beneficial substance taken by the  
22 commissioner or the commissioner's agent and designated as official by the  
23 commissioner.

- 1       8. "Registrant" means the person that registers the beneficial substance that bears the  
2       person's company name on the label and is the guarantor.
- 3       9. "Soil amendment" means any substance or a mixture of substances which is intended  
4       to improve the physical, chemical, biochemical, biological, or other characteristic of the  
5       soil. The term does not include fertilizers, agricultural liming materials, unmanipulated  
6       animal manures, unmanipulated vegetable manures, pesticides, and other materials  
7       exempt by regulation.

8       **Required labeling.**

- 9       1. Except for materials exempt under this chapter, the label on a beneficial substance  
10      must contain in a readable and conspicuous form:
- 11      a. The brand, including the product name;  
12      b. The net weight or net volume in both customary and metric measurements;  
13      c. The name and address of the guarantor, registrant, and manufacturer;  
14      d. A statement identifying the purpose of the product;  
15      e. The directions for intended use; and  
16      f. A statement of composition showing the amount of each ingredient, which is the  
17      agent in a product primarily responsible for the intended effects, and a statement  
18      noting, in case of bulk shipments, the information in written or printed form must  
19      accompany delivery and be supplied to the purchaser at time of delivery.
- 20      2. For a product claiming microorganisms, the labels must include the:
- 21      a. Information required under subsection 1;  
22      b. Expiration date for use; and  
23      c. Appropriate storage conditions and practices.

24      **Distributor's license - Fees.**

- 25      1. A person may not distribute a beneficial substance in this state without first obtaining a  
26      distributor's license from the commissioner.
- 27      2. A license is required for each location or mobile mechanical unit used by a distributor  
28      in the state.
- 29      3. The application for a license must be submitted on a form furnished by the  
30      commissioner and must be accompanied by a fee of one hundred dollars.

- 1       4. A license is effective for a two-year period beginning July first and ending June thirtieth
- 2       of each even-numbered year.
- 3       5. A license renewal application received after July thirty-first must be assessed a penalty
- 4       of one hundred dollars per location.
- 5       6. A license issued under this section:
- 6       a. Is not transferable;
- 7       b. Must be conspicuously posted at each location used by the distributor; and
- 8       c. Must be carried in each mobile mechanical unit operated by the distributor in the
- 9       state.
- 10      7. The commissioner shall forward all fees received under this section to the state
- 11      treasurer for deposit in the environment and rangeland protection fund.

12      **Product registration - Fees.**

- 13      1. Each brand and grade of fertilizer, fertilizer material, micronutrient, specialty fertilizer,
- 14      soil amendment, and plant amendment must be registered in the name of the person
- 15      appearing on the label before being offered for sale or distributed in this state.
- 16      2. The application for registration must be submitted to the commissioner on a form
- 17      furnished by the commissioner and must be accompanied by a:
- 18      a. Current product label; and
- 19      b. Fee of fifty dollars per product.
- 20      3. Each brand and grade registration is effective for a two-year period beginning July first
- 21      and ending June thirtieth of each even-numbered year.
- 22      4. A request for a registration renewal received after July thirty-first must be assessed a
- 23      penalty of one hundred dollars per product.
- 24      5. A distributor is not required to register a product listed in subsection 1 if that product is
- 25      already registered by another person, provided the label complies with the issued
- 26      registration.
- 27      6. The commissioner shall forward all fees received under this section to the state
- 28      treasurer for deposit in the environment and rangeland protection fund.

1       **Inspection fee.**

- 2       1. An inspection fee of ten dollars or twenty cents per ton [907.18 kilograms], whichever  
3       is greater, must be paid to the commissioner on all fertilizer, fertilizer material,  
4       micronutrients, and specialty fertilizer distributed in this state.
- 5       2. This subsection does not apply to:
- 6       a. Exchanges of product between a manufacturer and distributor; or  
7       b. An individual fertilizer, a fertilizer material, micronutrient, or specialty fertilizer,  
8       sold exclusively in a package of ten pounds [4.54 kilograms] or less.
- 9       3. On or before January thirty-first, each licensed person that distributes a fertilizer,  
10      fertilizer material, micronutrient, or specialty fertilizer in this state shall:
- 11      a. File with the commissioner a form stating the number of net tons [kilograms] of  
12      each listed product distributed in this state during the preceding calendar year;  
13      and
- 14      b. Submit to the commissioner the inspection fee required by this section.
- 15      4. If a person fails to submit an inspection fee, at the time and in the manner required by  
16      this section, the commissioner may impose a penalty of ten dollars or ten percent of  
17      the amount due, whichever is greater. The requirements of subsection 3 apply only to  
18      the last licensed person to handle the same lot of fertilizer.
- 19      5. Each distributor shall keep records regarding purchases and sales for three years. The  
20      records may be examined by the commissioner upon request.
- 21      6. The commissioner shall forward all fees received under this section to the state  
22      treasurer for deposit in the environment and rangeland protection fund.

23      **Exemptions.**

- 24      1. When clearly and conspicuously identified on a label, soil amending materials under  
25      this subsection are exempt, which include:
- 26      a. Hay;  
27      b. Straw;  
28      c. Peat;  
29      d. Leaf mold;  
30      e. Sand;  
31      f. Perlite;

- 1           g. Vermiculite;
- 2           h. Gypsum; and
- 3           i. Vermicompost.
- 4        2. Instead of a statement of composition as required in this chapter, the label of the
- 5           following soil amendments when clearly and conspicuously identified on the label must
- 6           include an ingredient statement, unless specific beneficial substance claims are made:
- 7           a. Compost;
- 8           b. Garden soil;
- 9           c. Landscaping soil or topsoil;
- 10          d. Mulch or wood products;
- 11          e. Planting mix;
- 12          f. Potting mix; and
- 13          g. Soilless growing media.
- 14        3. The commissioner may exempt soil amendments and other products under this
- 15           chapter.

16        **Cancellation of registration.**

- 17        1. The commissioner may cancel the registration of any beneficial substance product or
- 18           refuse to register any beneficial substance product as provided in this chapter due to:
- 19           a. An incomplete or insufficient registration application;
- 20           b. The misbranding or adulteration of a beneficial substance; or
- 21           c. A violation of this chapter or rules adopted under this chapter.
- 22        2. If the commissioner cancels or refuses to renew an existing registration due to the
- 23           misbranding or adulteration of a beneficial substance or due to a violation of this
- 24           chapter or a rule adopted under this chapter, the registrant or applicant may request a
- 25           hearing.

26        **Inspection, sampling, and analysis.**

- 27        1. The commissioner may act through an authorized agent to sample, inspect, make
- 28           analyses of, and test beneficial substances distributed within the state when it is
- 29           necessary to determine if a beneficial substance complies within the provisions of this
- 30           chapter. The commissioner may enter into or upon any point of distribution during
- 31           operating hours upon notice and open and sample any bulk material, bundle, package,

1           or other container containing or thought to contain a beneficial substance, and to  
2           inspect labels or access records pertaining to the distribution of the beneficial  
3           substance.

4       2.   The methods of analysis and sampling must be methods approved by the  
5           commissioner, including methods adopted by the journal of the association of  
6           agricultural chemists international.

7       3.   A single package may constitute an official sample. In determining whether a fertilizer,  
8           fertilizer material, micronutrient, specialty fertilizer, soil amendment, or plant  
9           amendment is deficient, the commissioner may consider only the analysis of the  
10          official sample.

11      4.   If the results of the commissioner's official analysis indicate a fertilizer, fertilizer  
12          material, micronutrient, specialty fertilizer, soil amendment, or plant amendment may  
13          be the subject of a penalty or other legal action, the commissioner shall forward the  
14          analysis to the registrant at least ten days before the report is submitted to the  
15          purchaser. If during the ten-day period, no adequate evidence to the contrary is made  
16          available to the commissioner by the registrant, the report becomes official.

17      5.   The commissioner shall retain an official sample found to be deficient for thirty days  
18          following the issuance of the analytical report.

19      6.   Upon request, the commissioner shall furnish to the registrant a portion of a sample  
20          found to be the subject of a penalty or other legal action.

21      **Unlawful acts.**

22      It is unlawful for a person to:

23      1.   Distribute an unregistered beneficial substance, unless exempt from the registration  
24          requirements of this section;

25      2.   Distribute a misbranded or adulterated beneficial substance;

26      3.   Distribute a beneficial substance if the label does not reflect its composition;

27      4.   Distribute a product as a beneficial substance if the sole function is to serve as a  
28          pesticide;

29      5.   Fail to supply the commissioner with an analysis of a beneficial substance when  
30          requested by the commissioner or the commissioner's designee;

31      6.   Fail to disclose on the label sources of potentially deleterious components;

1       7. Fail to cease distribution of any beneficial substance for which the commissioner has  
2       issued a stop sale order; or

3       8. Obstruct the commissioner in the performance of the duties under this chapter.

4       **Misbranding of beneficial substance prohibited.**

5       A person may not distribute a misbranded beneficial substance. A beneficial substance is  
6       deemed to be misbranded if the:

7       1. Labeling is false or misleading;

8       2. Beneficial substance is distributed under the name of another beneficial substance;  
9       and

10      3. Beneficial substance is not labeled as required by this chapter or in accordance with  
11      regulations prescribed under this chapter.

12      **Adulteration of a beneficial substance prohibited.**

13      A person may not distribute an adulterated beneficial substance. A beneficial substance is  
14      deemed to be adulterated if the beneficial substance:

15      1. Contains any deleterious or harmful substance in sufficient amount to render it  
16      injurious to beneficial plant life, animals, humans, aquatic life, soil, or water when  
17      applied in accordance with directions for use on the label;

18      2. Does not provide on the label of the substance adequate warning statements and  
19      directions for use, which may be necessary to protect plant life, animals, humans,  
20      aquatic life, soil, or water;

21      3. Composition falls below or differs from that which it is purported to possess by its label  
22      or any labeling which describes the composition of the beneficial substance; or

23      4. Contains unwanted crop or weed seed, or primary noxious or secondary noxious weed  
24      seed.

25      **Stop sale order.**

26      If the commissioner finds the beneficial substance product is being offered or exposed for  
27      sale in violation of this chapter, the commissioner may issue an order to stop the sale or use to  
28      the owner or custodian of any product containing beneficial substances. The order must remain  
29      in effect until the commissioner:

30      1. Determines the law has been complied with;

31      2. Gives written authorization for the disposal of the product; or

1       3. Gives written authorization for the product to be offered for sale.

2       **Penalties.**

3       1. Any person that knowingly violates this chapter is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

4       2. When construing and enforcing the provisions of this chapter, the act, omission, or  
5       failure of any officer, agent, or other person acting for or employed by any person must  
6       be deemed also to be the act, omission, or failure of the person or the employed  
7       person.

8       3. A person that violates this chapter or the rules adopted under this chapter is subject to  
9       a civil penalty not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars per violation. The civil  
10      penalty may be imposed by a court in a civil proceeding or by the agriculture  
11      commissioner through a proceeding under chapter 28-32. The assessment of a civil  
12      penalty does not preclude the imposition of other sanctions authorized by law, this  
13      chapter, or rules adopted under this chapter.

14      4. After the hearing, the commissioner may deny, suspend, revoke, or modify the  
15      provision of a certification issued under this chapter, if the commissioner determines  
16      the applicant for certification or the holder of a certificate has violated this chapter or a  
17      rule adopted under this chapter.

18      **Rules.**

19      The commissioner may adopt rules under chapter 28-32 to to effectuate the provisions of  
20      this chapter.