

HCS HB 479 -- AGRICULTURAL DATA COLLECTION (Houghton)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Civil and Criminal Proceedings

This bill specifies that any premises registration data, animal identification data, environmental data, or animal tracking data collected by any state agency from participants under the federal Animal Disease Traceability Program (ADTP) or any data collected for the purpose of animal health or environmental protection cannot be subject to the Open Records and Meetings Law, commonly known as the Sunshine Law. The bill allows the director of any state agency or the State Veterinarian within the Department of Agriculture to release information, without proprietary information, otherwise closed when the information is useful in controlling or preventing a disease outbreak, for public safety purposes, or to show particular animals or herds are not involved in a disease outbreak.

Any unauthorized release of information regardless of the type or quantity of information released must be a violation of these provisions. Any entity or person alleging a violation may bring a civil action against a state agency in a court of competent jurisdiction. A court may order any appropriate relief including damages in an amount of up to \$10,000; payment of reasonable attorney fees, costs, expenses; and any other injunctive relief the court deems necessary and proper.