

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 94004
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9004
(225) 342-7015
GOV.LA.GOV

June 29, 2023

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Clay J. Schexnayder
Speaker of the House
Louisiana House of Representatives
Post Office Box 94062
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9062

RE: Veto of House Bill No. 125 of the 2023 Regular Session

Dear Speaker Schexnayder:

Please be advised that I have vetoed House Bill No. 125 of the Regular Session of 2023.

This bill would prohibit the acquisition, purchase, or ownership of agricultural land by a “foreign adversary or prohibited foreign actor.” The bill is similar to House Bill No. 537, which I signed, rendering House Bill No. 125 unnecessary. House Bill No. 537 prohibits the purchasing or acquisition of immovable property by foreign adversaries, which would include agricultural land.

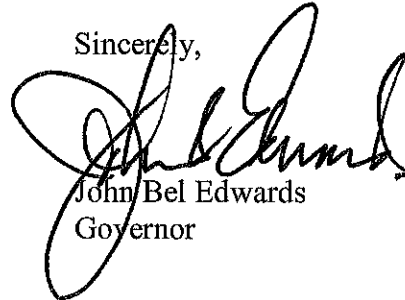
Despite their similarities, this bill differs from House Bill No. 537 in several problematic ways. First, House Bill No. 537 defines “foreign adversary” by referencing 15 CFR 7.4, the federal definition of foreign adversary that is subject to change. While House Bill No. 125 also references 15 CFR 7.4, it specifically names each of the governments currently included in 15 CFR 7.4. Should the federal government remove from the list of foreign adversaries any government currently included, Louisiana would continue to prohibit that government or people from that country from acquiring or owning agricultural land were this bill to be enacted.

Furthermore, House Bill No. 537 defines “person connected with a foreign adversary” as a juridical person. It does not apply to ownership of property by natural persons. Further, juridical persons categorized as persons connected with a foreign adversary are not prohibited outright from ownership of property as long as any ownership interest by a foreign adversary of the juridical entity is limited to less than fifty percent. House Bill No. 125 includes no such definition.

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Accordingly, House Bill No. 125 will not become law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a long tail that extends downwards and to the left, crossing over the printed name below it.

John Bel Edwards
Governor

enclosure

cc: Honorable Patrick Page Cortez
Louisiana Senate President