A bill for an act

relating to appropriations; appropriating money for veterans affairs, military affairs, and the Board of Animal Health; reducing and adjusting appropriations for agriculture; providing for disposition of certain funds; discontinuing certain ethanol producer payments; amending Minnesota Statutes 2006, sections 168.1255, by adding a subdivision; 190.19, subdivision 1, by adding a subdivision; Laws 2007, chapter 45, article 2, section 1.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

ARTICLE 1
APPROPRIATIONS

Section 1. **SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

The sums shown in the columns marked "Appropriations" are added to or, if shown in parentheses, subtracted from the appropriations in Laws 2007, chapter 45, articles 1 to 3, to the agencies and for the purposes specified in this act. The appropriations are from the general fund or another named fund and are available for the fiscal years indicated for each purpose. The figures "2008" and "2009" used in this article mean that the addition to or subtraction from the appropriation listed under them is available for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, or June 30, 2009, respectively. Supplemental appropriations and reductions to appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, are effective the day following final enactment.

	APPROPRIATIONS Available for the Year Ending June 30	
	2008	**2009**
Sec. 2. **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**	**$ (200,000)**	**$ 2,143,000**

$302,000 is a reduction in fiscal year 2009. The commissioner shall make a reduction of $100,000 from agricultural marketing, $100,000 shall come from efficiencies gained by the merger of the Agriculture Resources Management and Development Division and the Agriculture Finance Division, and the remainder shall come from a reduction in administrative services.

$2,385,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for grants to livestock producers via the livestock investment grant program in Minnesota Statutes, section 17.118, if enacted. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until spent.

The $200,000 appropriation in Laws 2007, chapter 45, article 1, section 3, subdivision 4, for a grant to the Elk River Economic Development Authority for a bioenergy project is canceled to the general fund.

$60,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for a grant to the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. The center must use the funds for an agricultural renewable energy internship pilot program that awards scholarships to students enrolling in a Minnesota four-year college or university beginning in the spring semester of 2009. This appropriation must be matched two-to-one by funding from the United States Department of Agriculture. The center must work with Minnesota colleges and universities and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to achieve racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, as well as rural-urban balance among scholarship recipients, and must award the scholarships to Minnesota students who are economically disadvantaged, who demonstrate need of financial assistance, and who are underrepresented in higher education. This is a onetime appropriation.

$310,000 is a reduction in fiscal year 2009 of the appropriation for ethanol producer payments in Laws 2007, chapter 45, article 1, section 3, subdivision 2. This reduction is onetime only.

$310,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for increased ground water monitoring activities. This appropriation is onetime only.

Sec. 3. **BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH**	**$**	**472,000**	**$**	**2,562,000**

For monitoring, testing, eradication, education, and outreach, and other activities the board is required to undertake to comply with federal regulations concerning cattle, bison, goats, and farmed cervidae under a USDA modified accredited status. $2,252,000 is added to the base in each of fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

Up to $12,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for a onetime grant to a beef cattle producer located outside of a bovine tuberculosis containment area who purchased certified tuberculosis-free cattle yet sustained financial losses beyond the producer's control due to restrictions imposed by the Board of Animal Health that effectively denied the producer the ability to sell the tuberculosis-free cattle during favorable market conditions.

Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 35.085, the board shall make this grant from the $100,000 appropriation for reimbursements in Laws 2007, chapter 45, article 1, section 4.

Sec. 4. **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Subdivision 1. **Total Appropriation** **$ (5,250,000) $ 1,357,000**

Appropriations by Fund

	2008	2009
General	(5,250,000)	1,695,000
Special Revenue	-0-	(338,000)

The amounts that may be spent for each purpose are specified in the following subdivisions.

Subd. 2. **Appropriations by Purpose**

$500,000 in fiscal year 2009 is added to the base for grants to counties for veterans service offices as provided under Laws 2007, chapter 45, article 2, section 1, paragraph (b).

By January 15, 2009, the commissioner shall report to the chair and ranking minority member of each committee in the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the policy and finance of veterans affairs regarding activities and expenditures under this program during fiscal years 2008 and 2009, including an explanation of the role of staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs in administering this program.

$3,500,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for state soldiers assistance under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.05. Of this amount, $2,000,000 is added to the base for this activity. This appropriation is available until spent.

By January 15, 2009, the commissioner shall report to the chair and ranking minority member of each committee in the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the policy and finance of veterans affairs regarding activities and expenditures under this program during fiscal years 2008 and 2009, including an explanation of the role of staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs in administering this program.

$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for casework services for veterans. The commissioner, in consultation with the Department of Administration, shall use the request for proposal process in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 16C, to solicit bids for the provision of these services. The casework services provided should be community-based, available statewide, and include in-home counseling.

By January 15, 2009, the commissioner shall report to the chair and ranking minority member of each committee in the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the policy and finance of veterans affairs regarding activities and expenditures under this program during fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

$220,000 in fiscal year 2009 is added to the base for operations of the LinkVET telephone line service for veterans.

For purposes of efficiency, the commissioner must combine the services available through the toll-free higher education call center for veterans with those available through LinkVET.

$250,000 in fiscal year 2009 is added to the base for the Veterans Claims Office for outreach and training to improve services and benefits to veterans. This appropriation includes money to add a female veterans service officer/coordinator position.

$50,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for designing a treatment program for veterans with traumatic brain injuries within the state veterans homes. By January 15, 2009, the commissioner must report to the chair and ranking minority member of each committee in the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the policy and finance of veterans affairs regarding the requirements and feasibility of implementing this program within existing and future veterans homes. This is a onetime appropriation.

$250,000 in fiscal year 2009 is added to the base for a grant to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans for their work in helping veterans and their families affected by homelessness.

By January 15, 2009, the commissioner shall report to the chair and ranking minority member of each committee in the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the policy and finance of veterans affairs regarding activities and expenditures under this program during fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

$200,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for:

(1) an intergovernmental and veterans strategic planning study for the Minnesota veterans homes, with special emphasis on exploring alternative models for the Minneapolis veterans home; and

(2) a study of the feasibility of partnering for home-based services for veterans with nongovernmental, nonprofit, or faith-based social service and health care delivery organizations, as a means of enabling veterans to live more independently, as an alternative to the projected sharply increasing needs for domiciliary and skilled nursing beds in state veterans homes. This is a onetime appropriation.

No staff may be hired for or allocated to any new veterans cemetery without explicit legislative approval.

Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 16A.62, on June 30, 2008, all money in the permanent trust account in the special revenue fund of the state veterans cemetery must be transferred to the permanent development and maintenance account in that fund.

$1,000,000 is a reduction in fiscal year 2009 for the Veterans Homes Board. The base appropriation for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 is reduced by $1,320,000 in each year. This reduction is made possible by the enhanced efficiency in administration of the homes associated with the transfer of governing authority from the Veterans Homes Board to the commissioner of veterans affairs.

$600,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for the state GI bill program in Minnesota Statutes, section 197.791. The base for this program is increased by $800,000 in each of fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

$5,250,000 in fiscal year 2008 and $5,000,000 in fiscal year 2009 are reductions from the appropriation made in Laws 2007, chapter 144, article 1, section 7. The base for the program in fiscal year 2010 is reduced by $4,500,000.

$100,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for a grant to the Minnesota Ambulance Association to implement a veterans paramedic apprenticeship program for the purpose of reintegrating qualified returning military medics into Minnesota's workforce in the field of paramedic and emergency services. This is a onetime appropriation.

$25,000 in fiscal year 2009 is to develop a pilot program for peer-to-peer counseling among combat veterans. This is a onetime appropriation.

By January 15, 2009, the commissioner shall report to the chair and ranking minority member of each committee in the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the policy and finance of veterans affairs regarding activities and expenditures under this program.

$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for improvements to the medication distribution system in the Minnesota veterans homes. This is a onetime appropriation.

By January 15, 2009, the commissioner shall report to the chair and ranking minority member of each committee in the senate and house of representatives with jurisdiction over the policy and finance of veterans affairs regarding activities and expenditures under this program, including an explanation of the role of staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs in administering this program.

$338,000 is a reduction in fiscal year 2009 from the special revenue fund appropriation from the account established in Minnesota Statutes, section 190.19. The base appropriation in fiscal years 2010 and 2011 is $0.

Sec. 5. **DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**	**$**	**0**	**$**	**1,000,000**

$500,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for military reservist economic injury loans under Minnesota Statutes, section 116J.996, if enacted.

$500,000 in fiscal year 2009 is for expenditures related to dislocated workers who are eligible veterans under Minnesota Statutes, section 116L.17, subdivision 1, paragraph (c), clause (6), if enacted.

ARTICLE 2
RELATED PROVISIONS

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 168.1255, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 6. **World War II memorial donation match account.** Money remaining in the World War II memorial donation match account after the state share of the construction costs of the World War II memorial has been paid in full is appropriated to the commissioner of veterans affairs for services and programs for veterans and their families.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 190.19, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The Minnesota "Support Our Troops" account is established in the special revenue fund. The account shall consist of contributions from private sources and appropriations. Money in the account is appropriated in equal shares to the Department of Military Affairs and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

EFFECTIVE DATE. Notwithstanding Laws 2007, chapter 45, articles 2, section 1, and 3, section 2, subdivision 3, this section is effective for distribution of the Minnesota "Support Our Troops" account the day following final enactment.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 190.19, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 2a. **Uses; veterans.** Money appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs from the Minnesota "Support Our Troops" account may be used for:

(1) grants to veterans service organizations; and

(2) outreach to underserved veterans.

Sec. 4. Laws 2007, chapter 45, article 2, section 1, is amended to read:

Section 1. **VETERANS AFFAIRS**	**$**	**12,855,000**	**$**	**12,571,000**

Appropriations by Fund

	2008	2009
General	12,517,000	12,233,000
Special Revenue	338,000	338,000

(a) $1,000,000 each year is added to the base for state soldier's assistance under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.05. If the appropriation for this purpose for either year is insufficient, the appropriation for the other year is available for it.

(b) $750,000 the first year and $750,000 the second year are added to the base for grants to counties under the terms of this section. The commissioner shall issue a request for proposals for grants to enhance the benefits, programs, and services provided to veterans. The request must specify that priority will be given to proposals that meet the programmatic goals established by the commissioner, including proposals that will:

(1) provide the most effective outreach to veterans;

(2) reintegrate combat veterans into society;

(3) collaborate with other social service agencies, educational institutions, and other relevant community resources;

(4) reduce homelessness among veterans; and

(5) provide measurable outcomes.

The commissioner may provide incentives to encourage, and may give priority to proposals that foster, regional collaboration for service delivery. The grants may be for a term of up to two years. The commissioner shall ensure that grants are made throughout all regions of the state and shall develop a description of best practices for the use of these grants. A county may not reduce its county veterans service officer budget by any amount received as a grant under this section. Grants made under this section are in addition to and not subject to the requirements for grants made under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.608. The Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers may apply for grants under this section beginning July 1, 2007. Any balance remaining after the first year does not cancel and is available in the second year. This appropriation must be included in the appropriation base through fiscal year 2011.

(c) $750,000 each year is for tribal veterans services offices.

(d) $750,000 each year is for a grant to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. This is a onetime appropriation.

(e) $200,000 each year is for marketing veterans outreach programs. This is a onetime appropriation.

(f) $250,000 each year is added to the base for grants to Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, and other congressionally chartered veterans service organizations designated by the commissioner.

(g) $450,000 the first year and $450,000 the second year are for the higher education veterans assistance program under Minnesota Statutes, section 197.585. This appropriation must be included in the agency appropriation base through fiscal year 2011.

(h) $100,000 each year is for information technology.

(i) $75,000 each year is for operations at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Little Falls.

(j) $250,000 each year is for administration of veterans programming. This appropriation includes money for the biennium for an ombudsman for residents and family members of residents at the Minneapolis Veterans' Home. The ombudsman must attend all meetings of the Veterans Homes Board and provide a report at each meeting regarding the status of concerns communicated to the ombudsman.

(k) $100,000 each year is for compensation for honor guards at the funerals of veterans in accordance with the program established in Minnesota Statutes, section 197.231. This is a onetime appropriation.

(l) $52,000 the first year is for spousal education benefits in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 197.75. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2009.

(m) $100,000 each year is for information and outreach regarding the availability of depleted uranium testing. The commissioner shall collaborate with the adjutant general to identify service members and veterans who may have been exposed to expended depleted uranium and to provide them with information regarding depleted uranium screening services provided by the federal government. This is a onetime appropriation.

(n) $250,000 the first year is for grants to assist World War II veterans in attending the dedication of the Minnesota World War II Memorial in St. Paul on June 9, 2007, and for other expenses of the dedication event. The commissioner may spend only that portion of this sum for which a matching amount, whether in cash or in kind, is donated by nongovernmental sources for this purpose. This appropriation is available immediately.

(o) $80,000 the first year is for suicide prevention and psychological support for veterans. Of this amount, $50,000 is for a study by the commissioner and the adjutant general of the psychological status and needs of returning Minnesota veterans, and $30,000 is for a telephone hotline to refer veterans to available psychological counseling services. The commissioner may use this appropriation to supplement an existing informational hotline service within the department, or may collaborate with any other provider of compatible, existing hotline services for this purpose. The referral hotline must be available to veterans statewide at all practicable hours. The commissioner must broadly publicize the availability of the telephone hotline and any local, state, and federal counseling services for Minnesota veterans using all practicable means available, including but not limited to: the agency Web site; local media announcements; announcements in service and trade publications; and any other practical means of communication.

The commissioner may spend up to two percent of this appropriation for development of special informational materials, such as refrigerator magnets, wallet cards, and other devices on which hotline numbers may be kept for immediate use. The commissioner also may accept and spend other contributions from nongovernmental sources for this purpose. This is a onetime appropriation.

(p) $338,000 each year is from the account in the special revenue fund established in Minnesota Statutes, section 190.19, for (1) grants to veterans service organizations; and (2) outreach to underserved veterans. Any balance in the first year does not cancel and is available in the second year.

Sec. 5. **DISCONTINUATION OF ETHANOL PRODUCER PAYMENTS.**

Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the commissioner of agriculture shall discontinue payments under Minnesota Statutes, section 41A.09, including deficiency payments, to any ethanol producer that ceased operations and declared bankruptcy in 2004.