**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**S. 789**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

Senate Resolution

Sponsors: Senator Jackson

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Introduced in the Senate on May 9, 2023

Adopted by the Senate on May 9, 2023

Summary: Columbia Empowerment Zone 15th anniversary

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

5/9/2023 Senate Introduced and adopted ([Senate Journal‑page 8](h:\sj\20230509.docx))

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=789&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[05/09/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/789_20230509.docx)

A senate RESOLUTION

To recognize and honor the outstanding contributions of Columbia Empowerment Zone and to congratulate the staff and board members upon the occasion of their fifteenth anniversary of service.

Whereas, originally part of a United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Columbia Empowerment Zone was a program seeking to create public-private partnerships that provide incentive and opportunity to businesses in underserved communities, and in April 2008 it became Columbia Empowerment Zone, Inc. (CEZ, Inc.), a non-profit corporation; and

Whereas, the vision of CEZ, Inc., is to foster, encourage, nurture, and support the City of Columbia as a socially and economically vibrant community with sustainable jobs and a thriving, entrepreneurial, small‑business environment by creating and supporting economic development opportunities; and

Whereas, today, CEZ, Inc., promotes urban revitalization and job creation by providing opportunities for small businesses and by building public-private partnerships that generate private investment and using them to develop the community, lessening the burden of local government; and

Whereas, CEZ, Inc.’s, strategy considers the long-term potential of city real estate, especially in the inner city. As a non-profit entity, it seeks to generate economic returns to support financial investment in facilities and to sustain development activities that focus on job creation and sustainability; and

Whereas, the staff and board members of CEZ, Inc., take pride in spurring economic development to assist small businesses that bring community jobs. Investments on Sunset Boulevard; North Main, Harden, Lady, and Richland streets; and Atlas and Bluff roads have cultivated economic growth; and

Whereas, by working closely with city departments and administration and other agencies that promote economic development and entrepreneurship, CEZ, Inc., is a valuable key to assuring that small businesses have a place to grow and thrive in the City of Columbia; and

Whereas, CEZ and CEZ, Inc., have implemented programs to support job training for Columbia residents, incentivized businesses to start and grow, provided affordable senior housing, eliminated blight, and provided access to healthcare in Columbia. They implemented the Commercial Loan Fund (almost thirty million dollars), CEZ Business Improvement/Façade Program, Youth Employment Program (YEO), Neighborhood Employment Program (NEO), Work Initiative Program (WIP), EZ Tax Incentives Program, and Vacant & Abandoned Building Incentive Program (VABIP); and

Whereas, CEZ, Inc., has purchased and recruited business to the North Main Plaza phase I, II; recruited an onsite, full-service ATM at North Main Plaza phase II; recruited three national chains to the North Main corridor; developed mixed-income senior housing on phase III and IV of North Main Plaza; created over twelve million dollars in economic development contributions to the North Main Corridor; purchased a vacant building on Lady Street and recruited small businesses to the downtown area; purchased a vacant/blighted building on Harden Street and recruited successful small business, establishing a headquarters office and opening several locations around the State, to name a few; and

Whereas, CEZ, Inc., has received awards for contributions to revitalization in Columbia, such as National Development Council’s 2009 First Place Award for Innovative Job Creation and International Economic Development Council’s 2016 Bronze Excellence in Economic Development Award and its 2019 Bronze and Silver Excellence in Economic Development awards; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate values the significant contributions of CEZ, Inc., and celebrates on May 10, 2023, its fifteenth anniversary of meaningful work in the City of Columbia. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor the outstanding contributions of Columbia Empowerment Zone, Inc., and congratulate the staff and board members upon the occasion of their fifteenth anniversary of service.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Crystal Garcia, Administrative Manager for Columbia Empowerment Zone, Inc.

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