**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO CREATE, STRENGTHEN, AND EXPAND LOCAL FARM AND FOOD ECONOMIES THROUGHOUT SOUTH CAROLINA BY SUPPORTING STATE POLICIES THAT ENCOURAGE STATE AGENCIES, STATE‑OWNED FACILITIES, AND STATE PARTNERS TO PURCHASE LOCAL SOUTH CAROLINA FARM OR FOOD PRODUCTS.

Whereas, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture is currently investing in programs that support and enhance the value of local products through the “Certified South Carolina” and “Fresh on the Menu” programs; and

Whereas, the United States Department of Agriculture is promoting regional economies through its “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” program, as well as a food hub portal and program; and

Whereas, a more localized food economy ensures a more resilient and secure food supply in South Carolina; and

Whereas, local and fresh food are an integral component of promoting healthy eating and public health; and

Whereas, a South Carolina based local farm and food product economy revitalizes rural and urban communities; and

Whereas, localized food economies support rural job creation and economic growth; and

Whereas, local and regional food economies ensure a readily available supply of fresh food in the event of an emergency; and

Whereas, increased local food purchasing boosts our state’s agricultural economy; and

Whereas, the current economic food purchasing structure makes it increasingly difficult for small and medium‑sized farmers to sell their produce locally; and

Whereas, less than ten percent of what consumers purchase in South Carolina is grown in South Carolina. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the General Assembly:

(1) encourage state agencies, state‑owned facilities, state partners, and other entities to purchase local farm or food products;

(2) encourage the tracking and reporting of local purchases in order to meet local farm and food product goals;

(3) encourage local farm and food entrepreneurs to identify and secure necessary resources to operate locally;

(4) support the building of infrastructure, including aggregation, processing, storage, packaging, and distribution facilities necessary to move local farm or food products to local, regional, and other markets;

(5) support programs that recruit, train, and provide technical assistance to South Carolina farmers and residents in order to encourage the production and consumption of local farm or food products;

(6) support the elimination of legal barriers hindering the development of a local farm and food economy;

(7) support the use of public lands for growing local farm or food products by working with governmental entities at the local, state, and federal levels;

(8) support state‑led local food programs such as “Certified South Carolina” and “Fresh on the Menu” and other state run programs and public awareness campaigns that highlight the economic benefits of a local food economy;

(9) support effective monitoring of the local food economy through voluntary data collection, tracking, measurement, analysis, and reporting;

(10) support the establishment of a procurement goal that aims to have fifteen percent of all food and food products purchased by state agencies and state‑owned facilities, including, without limitation, facilities for persons with mental health and developmental disabilities, correctional facilities, and public universities, be local farm or food products by 2015; and

(11) acknowledge that a local preference when a state contract for purchase of food or food products is set to be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, so that an otherwise qualified bidder who will fulfill the contract through the use of local farm or food products may be given preference over other bidders, provided that the cost included in the bid of local farm or food products is not more than percent greater than the cost included in a bid that is not for local farm or food products.

Be it further resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, support the purchase of local food and food products by state agencies and state‑owned facilities in South Carolina, and the annual tracking and reporting of these purchases for the betterment of public health, food security and rural and agricultural revitalization in South Carolina.

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