

HOUSE BILL NO. 708

INTRODUCED BY J. KASSMIER, F. ANDERSON, B. BEARD, M. BINKLEY, W. CURDY, J. DOOLING, M. FUNK, C. KNUDSEN, B. LER, M. MALONE, R. MARSHALL, W. MCKAMEY, A. OLSEN, F. SMITH, K. SULLIVAN, K. WALSH, R. WHITEMAN PENA

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN INTERIM STUDY OF FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL PROSPERITY; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE."

WHEREAS, food security is vital to our state and nation; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is Montana's top production industry and comprises a central and vital component of this state's economy; and

WHEREAS, the prosperity of Montana's agricultural commodities fuels the prosperity of the state; and

WHEREAS, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations states that "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely stressed underlying issues of food access and food distribution in the state; and

WHEREAS, Montana's agricultural economy has grown in response to demand for more diverse crops, such as pulse crops and other specialty crops; and

WHEREAS, ~~the upscaling of~~ ADDING VALUE TO Montana-grown food and crops is essential to expanding the state's economy and increasing the wealth of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the importance of GROWING AND ADDING VALUE TO LOCAL PRODUCTS AND maintaining markets for the state's agricultural commodities while also providing food security for its citizens; and

WHEREAS, spending on agriculture and food systems directly supports public health, local economies, and independent and historically marginalized farmers and ranchers.

1 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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3 NEW SECTION. Section 1. Committee on food security and agricultural prosperity. (1) There is
4 a committee on food security and agricultural commodities.

5 (2) ~~The~~ IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE AND THE
6 SENATE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND IRRIGATION COMMITTEE, THE president of the senate, the minority leader of
7 the senate, the speaker of the house, and the minority leader of the house shall each appoint one legislative
8 member from their respective parties to the stakeholder panel.

9 (3) ~~The~~ IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE AND THE
10 SENATE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND IRRIGATION COMMITTEE, THE president of the senate and the minority leader
11 of the senate shall jointly appoint five members to the committee, including one representative from each of the
12 following groups or areas:

- 13 (a) an agricultural production organization;
14 (b) a livestock production organization;
15 (c) a community food bank;
16 (d) a nutritional expert; and
17 (e) ~~an anti-poverty organization~~ A LOCAL FOOD GROWER AND RETAILER.

18 (4) The legislative services division shall provide staff assistance to the committee.

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20 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Duties of committee on food security and agricultural prosperity. (1)

21 The committee on food security and agricultural prosperity shall study issues related to the production of food
22 and the consumption of food in the state.

- 23 (2) The committee shall examine:
24 (a) the availability of food in the state;
25 (b) the production of food;
26 (c) the access to food by individuals or households;
27 ~~(d) the use of food;~~
28 ~~(e) issues of poverty and malnutrition;~~

