

HOUSE BILL NO. 716
INTRODUCED BY M. JOPEK

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LOCAL FOODS GRANT PROGRAM TO HELP MONTANA SCHOOLS DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL FARMERS AND PRODUCERS; REQUIRING THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MONTANA FARMERS AND FOOD PRODUCERS TO INCREASE THEIR MARKETS; PROVIDING FOR GRANTS TO FOOD PROCESSING ENTITIES AND LOCAL FOOD COOPERATIVES THAT PROCESS LOCALLY GROWN FARM PRODUCTS FOR SCHOOL AND INSTITUTIONAL MARKETS AND THAT RENT EQUIPMENT TO LOCAL FARMERS AND FOOD PRODUCERS IN ORDER TO PROCESS PRODUCTS FOR SALE; REQUIRING A REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE; PROVIDING A SET-ASIDE OF FUNDS FROM THE MONTANA GROWTH THROUGH AGRICULTURE ACT TO FUND PROGRAM GRANTS; AMENDING SECTION 90-9-202, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

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

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Local foods grant program.** (1) There is a local foods grant program to be administered by the council. The purpose of the program is to help Montana schools develop relationships with local farmers and producers.

(2) A school, school district, consortium of schools, or consortium of school districts may apply to the council for a grant award to:

(a) purchase equipment, resources, and materials that will help to increase the use of local foods in the school food service program;

(b) purchase items, including local farm products, that will help teachers to use hands-on educational techniques to teach children about nutrition and to make connections between farming and the foods that students consume; and

(c) provide professional development and technical assistance to help teachers educate students about nutrition and farm-to-school connections.

(3) In awarding grants pursuant to this section, the council shall consult with the superintendent of public instruction to develop specific criteria and application forms for the grants.

(4) A grant awarded pursuant to this section may not exceed \$15,000. A total of not more than 50 grants

may be awarded.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Grants to food processing entities to assist local food producers -- educational opportunities for farm to market. (1) The director of the department and the council shall work with existing programs and organizations to develop and implement educational opportunities for farmers and food producers to increase their markets through:

- (a) sales to schools and state government agencies;
- (b) participation in the federal food commodities program; and
- (c) sales to regulated child care programs.

(2) (a) The council may award grants to food processing entities and local food cooperatives that:

(i) process locally grown farm products for school and institutional markets, in order to help farmers and food producers increase the size and stability of markets and process; or

(ii) rent equipment to local farmers and food producers in order to process products for sale.

(b) The council shall develop rules for administering a process for accepting applications and awarding grants to qualified applicants pursuant to this section.

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Report to legislature. On or before December 1, 2009, the department shall make recommendations to the house agriculture committee, the senate committee on agriculture, livestock, and irrigation, the house committee on human services, and the senate committee on public health, welfare, and safety regarding:

(1) legislative strategies to encourage the use of locally grown foods in Montana schools, regulated child care programs, and state agencies, taking into consideration the benefit to the economy of rural farms and the state compared to the impact of purchasing agricultural products grown or produced in Montana when available at more than the cost of similar products produced outside the state, after consulting farmers, food service personnel, state agency personnel involved in purchasing agricultural products, and representatives of organizations interested in creating strategies to increase the use of locally grown foods in Montana schools and state agencies;

(2) the effectiveness of the U.S. department of agriculture food commodities distribution program, including ways to improve integration of the program with efforts to include more fresh foods and Montana-grown foods and methods to increase the delivery of foods in a timely manner, after consulting with people who work in or may potentially use the food commodities distribution program;

- (3) the effectiveness of the local foods grant program established in [section 1]; and
- (4) the development and effectiveness of school nutrition policies.

Section 4. Section 90-9-202, MCA, is amended to read:

"90-9-202. Powers and duties of council. The council shall:

- (1) establish policies and priorities to enhance the future development of agriculture in Montana[, including the Indian reservations in the state];
- (2) make investments or loans in agricultural development projects that have a short- or long-term ability to stimulate agriculture development and diversification in [rural, urban, and tribal settings in] Montana, including but not limited to:
 - (a) seed capital projects for development and commercialization of new products and processes;
 - (b) foreign and domestic market development activities;
 - (c) applied technological research;
 - (d) agricultural development projects; and
 - (e) agricultural technology assistance and transfer; ~~and~~
- (3) accept grants or receive devises of money or property for use in making the investments or loans authorized by this chapter; and
- (4) make local foods grants and grants to food processing entities and local food cooperatives for the purposes of [sections 1 and 2]. (Bracketed language terminates June 30, 2009--secs. 3, 4, Ch. 460, L. 2005.)"

NEW SECTION. Section 5. Set-aside of growth through agriculture funds. The Montana agriculture development council shall set aside \$1 million for the biennium beginning July 1, 2007, from money appropriated to the department for the Montana Growth Through Agriculture Act in Title 90, chapter 9, to be used for the purposes of [sections 1 and 2] as follows:

- (1) \$750,000 for local food grants to help Montana schools develop relationships with local farmers and producers pursuant to [section 1]; and
- (2) \$250,000 for grants to food processing entities and local food cooperatives pursuant to [section 2].

NEW SECTION. Section 6. Codification instruction. [Sections 1 and 2] are intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 90, chapter 9, part 3, and the provisions of Title 90, chapter 9, part 3, apply to [sections 1 and 2].

NEW SECTION. **Section 7. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2007.

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