

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10
INTRODUCED BY R. HAMILTON

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA SUPPORTING A STATE FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL POLICY DESIGNED TO CREATE A SAFE AND SECURE FOOD SUPPLY AND A FARM AND FOOD SYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS MONTANA FARMS, RANCHES, AND BUSINESSES; AND URGING THAT THIS POLICY GUIDE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DECISIONS.

WHEREAS, consolidation of farm and ranch operations results in population losses in agricultural areas and depresses rural communities; and

WHEREAS, recent outbreaks of food-borne illness have heightened public concern about food safety; and

WHEREAS, health and safety problems with large, centralized systems of production, processing, and distribution have proportionately large and widespread impacts; and

WHEREAS, numerous factors pose serious challenges to the sustainability of Montana's farms and ranches and to the security of the state's food supply, including climate change, world oil supplies, consolidation in the food processing and transportation industries, increasing pesticide resistance and pest dispersal, and loss of agricultural land to development; and

WHEREAS, consumers are increasingly interested in purchasing fresh foods that are locally produced; and

WHEREAS, foods that are grown, processed, and purchased locally provide greater economic benefit for producers, consumers, and the local economy and are less affected by the vagaries of national and international politics and finance; and

WHEREAS, foods that are grown and processed close to their point of consumption require less energy for transportation, causing fewer environmental impacts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Montana Legislature supports the goal of a state food and agricultural policy designed to create, nourish, and sustain a strong farm and food system in this state that features cooperation among producers,

processors, and distributors and that is small in scale, locally owned, sustainable, diverse, dispersed, and resilient.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Legislature, through passage of this resolution, intends to promote the safety and security of Montana's food supply and preserve family farms and rural communities by reversing the trend toward consolidation and globalization in agriculture and the food industry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Legislature intends that this goal will guide:

(1) the Montana Department of Agriculture, the Montana Department of Livestock, the Montana Department of Commerce, and the units of the Montana University System in setting priorities for education, research, economic development, and economic incentive activities;

(2) state agencies in designing and implementing rules that govern agricultural support, licensing, and permitting programs; and

(3) state and local governments in setting policies involving the purchase of agricultural products.

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