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HOUSE BILL NO. 276

INTRODUCED BY M. MALONE, T. WELCH, S. KERNS, J. DOOLING, M. HOPKINS

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FARM TO FOOD BANK GRANT PROGRAM; REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH AND ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; ESTABLISHING GRANT REQUIREMENTS; ESTABLISHING A GRANT PROCESS; PROVIDING PREFERENCES FOR GRANT AWARDS; ESTABLISHING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING A GENERAL FUND TRANSFER; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE."

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

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Short title. [Sections 1 through 7] may be cited as the "Farm to Food Bank Grant Act".

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Purpose. (1) The purpose of [sections 1 through 7] is to provide a farm to food bank grant program administered by the department for farm to food bank activities. Farm to food bank programs strengthen local food economies by creating a new market for Montana farmers and ranchers, expanding access to fresh, local products for those who may not otherwise have access to those products, and strengthening producer and consumer relationships in the state. Farm to food bank implementation looks different in each community but in Montana it includes the following elements:

- (a) using available funds to support Montana farmers and ranchers;
- (b) support for regional food hubs that can leverage producer relationships to purchase, process, store, and distribute products for and to food banks; and
- (c) access to fresh, healthy, local products for low-income consumers.

(2) [Sections 1 through 7] create a program to:

- (a) support regional food hubs in building producer networks and purchasing, processing, storing, and distributing local food to food pantries;

1 program;

2 (b) any legislative appropriations; and

3 (c) gifts, grants, or donations made for the purposes of [section 1 through 7].

4

5 NEW SECTION. Section 7. Farm to food bank reporting requirements. The department shall
6 design and compile evaluation reports from grant recipients and prepare a report for the natural resources and
7 transportation budget committee established in 5-12-501 in accordance with 5-11-210 that describes:

8 (1) the total dollar increase in purchases of Montana-grown fruit, vegetables, and other farm
9 products;

10 (2) products purchased and the total number of businesses from which the products were
11 purchased; and

12 (3) recommendations for continuing the farm to food bank grant program.

13

14 NEW SECTION. Section 8. Transfer of funds. By August 1, 2023, the state treasurer shall transfer
15 \$1 million from the general fund to the account established in [section 6].

16

17 NEW SECTION. Section 9. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$1 million from the ~~state general~~
18 ~~fund account established in [section 6]~~ to the department of agriculture one-time-only for the biennium
19 beginning July 1, 2023, for the purposes provided for in [sections 1 through 7].

20

21 NEW SECTION. Section 10. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a
22 copy of [this act] to each federally recognized tribal government in Montana.

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24 NEW SECTION. Section 11. Codification instruction. [Sections 1 through 7] are intended to be
25 codified as an integral part of Title 80, and the provisions of Title 80 apply to [sections 1 through 7].

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27 NEW SECTION. Section 12. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2023.

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