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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 347
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
on February 2, 2007)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Potts)

Requesting the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and the Secretary of Education to establish a Farm-to-School Task Force to develop a plan for implementing a Farm-to-School Program in Virginia. Report.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has determined that childhood obesity has become a significant health concern; and

WHEREAS, the need exists to promote healthy lifestyles within our public schools and across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, a number of states, including New York, have established, by statute, farm-to-school programs "to facilitate and promote the purchase" of homegrown farm products by the educational institutions within the state; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's fruit and vegetable growers have the ability to provide quality farm-fresh food products to schools, universities, and other educational institutions under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, the health benefits for our children are paramount, and promoting the purchase of Virginia farm products is vital to our economy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and the Secretary of Education be requested to establish a Farm-to-School Task Force to develop a plan for implementing a Farm-to-School Program in Virginia. In developing its plan, the Task Force shall study the best method of providing information to the Department of Education, interested school divisions, and institutions of higher education regarding the availability of Virginia farm products, including the names and contact information of farmers, farm organizations, and businesses that market Virginia farm products.

The Task Force shall be appointed jointly by the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and the Secretary of Education and shall consist of one nutrition specialist; one procurement specialist; representatives of Virginian's fruit and vegetable growers and other agricultural interests; and representatives of rural and urban school divisions.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Task Force by the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Department of Education, and Department of General Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Task Force for this study, upon request.

The Task Force appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and the Secretary of Education shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2007, and the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and the Secretary of Education shall submit jointly to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of the Task Force findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2008 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.