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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 624

Offered January 12, 2011

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Memorializing the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) to work collaboratively with the shellfish industry and state regulators to improve shellfish safety.

Patrons—Peace, Lewis, Morgan and Pollard

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the harvest and culture of shellfish have formed an important part of Virginia's cultural heritage and economic development for hundreds of years; and

WHEREAS, the culture of shellfish is a sustainable practice with proven environmental benefits providing critical ecosystem benefits to Virginia's marine environment; and

WHEREAS, the sustainable harvest and culture of shellfish provide important jobs and economic development with economic impacts in many related industries that are fundamental to the Commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay and coastal economy; and

WHEREAS, the shellfish industry, including oysters, clams and scallops, represents a significant portion of Virginia's coastal economy with an estimated dockside value of approximately \$81 million in 2009; and

WHEREAS, shellfish are an excellent source of and provide highly nutritional, and essential, heart-healthy fatty acids, proteins, and minerals; and

WHEREAS, through the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP)—a cooperative program between the FDA, state regulatory agencies, and the shellfish industry—risks associated with eating shellfish are significantly reduced; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Shellfish Sanitation, in the Virginia Department of Health, is involved with many aspects of the Commonwealth's coastal water quality, which includes monitoring for compliance with the NSSP; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Shellfish Sanitation and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission successfully work in cooperation with the FDA through the auspices of the ISSC to implement the NSSP, with the aim of improving the monitoring, safety, and handling of the Commonwealth's shellfish resources; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Shellfish Sanitation and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission have worked with industry, the FDA, and the ISSC to develop regulations and procedures to ensure that the Commonwealth's shellfish are among the safest in the world; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Food and Drug Administration and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference be urged to work collaboratively with the shellfish industry and state regulators to improve shellfish safety; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the FDA, working through the auspices of the ISSC and in cooperation with the shellfish industry and state regulators, ensure that adequate funds are available for research into methods to continue to improve shellfish sanitation and to provide for the proper education of producers, public health professionals, and consumers of shellfish about the risks and health benefits associated with the consumption of raw shellfish; and be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the ISSC not promulgate any regulation or guidance limiting the rights of Virginians to enjoy and consume raw shellfish unless all other alternatives have been evaluated and the economic impacts of such action are fully considered and that the FDA and the ISSC inspect and evaluate the safety of imported shellfish products with standards equal to domestic National Shellfish Sanitation Program standards; and be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the Food and Drug Administration and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.

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