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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 633

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 9, 2017

Requesting the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to study the feasibility of and develop recommendations for a program that incentivizes grocery stores to donate unsold, unspoiled food to charitable organizations. Report.

Patrons—Simon, Boysko, Hayes, Hope, Kory, Krizek, Levine, Mullin, Plum, Price, Tyler and Watts;
Senators: Ebbin, Howell, McClellan and Surovell

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that 31 percent of food is wasted at the retail and consumer levels in the United States, which is equivalent to approximately 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion worth of food; and

WHEREAS, this amount of food waste has far-reaching impacts on many fronts, including food security, environmental concerns, and resource conservation; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through several initiatives, are calling for a 50 percent reduction in the nation's food waste by 2030 and are urging entities across the food chain—farms, agricultural processors, food manufacturers, grocery stores, restaurants, universities, schools, and local governments—to join efforts to reduce, recover, and recycle food waste in order to improve overall food security and conserve our natural resources; and

WHEREAS, grocery stores often discard and send to landfills good-quality food approaching its best-before date, thereby wasting wholesome food that could have helped feed families in need; and

WHEREAS, the development of a program by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (the Department) that incentivizes grocery stores to contract with hunger-relief charitable organizations to collect such food and redistribute it to needy families may help to significantly reduce food waste, protect the environment, and enable charitable organizations to provide thousands more free meals each year to people struggling to afford food in the Commonwealth's communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services be requested to study the feasibility of and develop recommendations for a program that incentivizes grocery stores to donate unsold, unspoiled food to charitable organizations.

In conducting its study, the Department shall (i) develop recommendations for a program that would incentivize grocery stores to donate unsold, unspoiled food that would otherwise be discarded or wasted to hunger-relief charitable organizations for redistribution to needy families; (ii) identify the size and nature of grocery stores that could effectively participate in and advance the goals of such program; (iii) determine whether sanctions should be imposed for failure to participate in the program and, if so, the nature of such sanctions; (iv) identify other policies that could be implemented to reduce food waste and its impacts on the environment and food security in the Commonwealth; and (v) consult with relevant stakeholders.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department for this study, upon request.

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2017, and for the second year by November 30, 2018, and the Department shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document for each year. The executive summaries and reports 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 next Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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