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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 522

Offered January 17, 1997

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the feasibility of providing exemptions from the Commonwealth's statutes and regulations for the on-farm sale of on-farm produced agricultural products.

Patrons—Wilkins, Abbitt, Albo, Baker, Bennett, Bloxom, Bryant, Callahan, Christian, Connally, Cooper, Councill, Crouch, Davies, Deeds, Dillard, Drake, Dudley, Griffith, Guest, Howell, Hull, Ingram, Johnson, Keating, Kilgore, Landes, McDonnell, Morgan, Nelms, Parrish, Phillips, Purkey, Putney, Sherwood, Stump, Thomas, Van Landingham, Van Yahres, Way and Weatherholtz; Senators: Barry, Colgan, Couric, Hanger, Hawkins, Houck, Lambert, Newman, Norment, Quayle, Reynolds, Ticer and Waddell

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, it is the declared policy of the Commonwealth to conserve, protect, and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural land for the production of food and other agricultural products and to promote economic growth in rural Virginia compatible with its cultural, natural, and economic environments; and

WHEREAS, regulations necessitated by large agribusiness farming operations, which often produce only one or two agricultural products, are unnecessary and too costly for family farms that are well-suited to provide on a much smaller scale a variety of agricultural products for on-farm sale directly to local consumers; and

WHEREAS, the family farm thrives on this diversification, which is often essential to a family farm's profitability; and

WHEREAS, there is an increasing demand from consumers for fresh, locally produced agricultural products, and this demand is creating economic opportunities for the family farm which should not be ignored; and

WHEREAS, the family farm needs immediate relief from the regulatory burden it currently bears so that it may again prosper and Virginia's rural economy and cultural farm heritage may be revitalized and preserved; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the feasibility of providing exemptions from the Commonwealth's statutes and regulations for the on-farm sale of on-farm produced agricultural products. The joint subcommittee shall consider the economic and environmental impact which would result from such exemptions, any on-farm sales restrictions that may need to exist for the protection of the public health, and the demand from both farmers and consumers for such exemptions. The joint subcommittee shall consist of nine members as follows: five members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, and four members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

In conducting the study the joint subcommittee shall seek input from farmers, farm associations, consumers, and consumer associations.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$ 6000.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1998 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for processing legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

INTRODUCED

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