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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 692

Offered January 21, 2015

Designating the last full week in October, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as Farm-to-School Week in Virginia.

Patrons—Scott, Garrett, Morris and Toscano

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, in 2007, the General Assembly directed the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and the Secretary of Education to develop a plan to implement a Farm-to-School program across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, a strong Virginia Farm-to-School Program connects schools directly with community farmers and local food hubs; paves the way for schools to more easily purchase fresh, nutrient-rich farm products; positively affects the lifelong healthy eating behaviors of Virginia's children; and provides reliable, ongoing markets to support Virginia's local agricultural economy; and

WHEREAS, since the Virginia Farm-to-School Program began in 2007, there has been a substantial increase in the amount of locally grown foods served in schools; in 2014, all regions of the Commonwealth participated in Farm-to-School Week by featuring a bounty of Virginia-grown foods as healthy choices on school menus; and

WHEREAS, according to the USDA Farm to School Census, 80 school divisions in the Commonwealth are serving locally grown food, representing 1,344 individual schools and an estimated 964,887 students in attendance; and

WHEREAS, public schools in the Commonwealth serve approximately 655,000 lunches daily to nourish their students, resulting in more than 112 million lunches served during a 180-day school year; if \$0.25 a day per student lunch is devoted to purchasing locally grown Virginia farm products, a total of \$163,750 would be generated daily and more than \$29 million would be reinvested annually in Virginia communities and the economy; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing need to prioritize access to healthy foods for young people due to the critical health concerns of childhood obesity and the increasing incidence of type 2 diabetes in children, which are both diet-related and prevalent across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, according to the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, one in five of Virginia's children between the ages of 10 and 17 are overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia school districts, farms, and businesses that participate in Virginia Farm-to-School Week are recognized for their dedication and hard work; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Food System Council, and Virginia Farm-to-School Work Group are recognized for their many contributions to help develop, promote, and implement Virginia's Farm-to-School Program plan and the first Virginia Farm-to-School Week, as well as their ongoing efforts to strengthen the connections between the Commonwealth's local farms and school districts; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has designated October as National Farm to School Month; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate the last full week of October, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as Farm-to-School Week in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the coordinator of the Virginia Farm-to-School Program so that members of the program may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this week on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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