

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 112

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

A RESOLUTION

To create and provide the Healthy Food Retail Study Group to investigate the lack of access to fresh healthy foods in certain rural and urban areas in Louisiana and to develop recommendations for the creation of a statewide financing program to bring fresh food retailers into underserved areas and a plan to implement such a program.

WHEREAS, increasing access to retail outlets that sell fresh food is an important strategy for improving the nutritional health and the economic vitality of underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, research in Louisiana and nationally shows that residents of lower-income communities often have inadequate access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy food; and

WHEREAS, this lack of access negatively affects the health of residents, especially children and the elderly; and

WHEREAS, the growing epidemic of overweight and obese individuals is due to poor diet and physical inactivity, putting growing numbers of Louisiana citizens at risk for type-two diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, and other diet-related diseases; and

WHEREAS, access to fresh healthy food is vital to fighting the epidemic of obesity and diet-related diseases; and

WHEREAS, while individuals make choices about what they eat, these choices are affected by the availability of food in their community; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that convenient access to retail outlets that sell fresh produce increases fruit and vegetable consumption; and

WHEREAS, retail grocery stores and other fresh food retailers are important economic anchors in communities, providing fresh food at competitive prices, creating jobs, and attracting additional investment; and

WHEREAS, in 2004 the state of Pennsylvania established the Fresh Food Financing Initiative, a successful public-private partnership that increases the number of supermarkets and other fresh food retailers in underserved communities across the state; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania program provides grants and loans to meet the financing needs of supermarkets, smaller grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other fresh food retailers operating in underserved areas; and

WHEREAS, the state of Pennsylvania appropriated funds to create the program, which has leveraged substantially more resources through a variety of public and private sources.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana hereby creates the Healthy Food Retail Study Group to investigate the lack of access to fresh healthy foods in certain rural and urban communities and to develop recommendations for the creation of a statewide financing program to provide grants and loans to bring fresh food retailers into areas in need of improved access to healthy food.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group shall develop a plan to implement such a program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group created herein shall consist of the following members:

1. The chair of the Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs Committee or her designee.
2. The chair of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee or her designee.
3. The chair of the Senate Finance Committee or his designee.
4. The secretary of Department of Economic Development or his designee.
5. The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals or his designee.
6. The commissioner of agriculture and forestry or his designee.
7. The executive director of the Office of Community Development or her designee.
8. A policy adviser from the Governor's Office of Policy to be designated by the governor.
9. A representative of the Louisiana Council on Obesity Prevention and Management.
10. The executive director of the Louisiana Retailers Association or her designee.
11. The president of Associated Grocers, Inc., or his designee.
12. The executive director of the Louisiana Public Health Institute or his designee.

13. The director of the Prevention Research Center at Tulane University or his designee.

14. The executive director of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center or his designee.

15. The chancellor of the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center or his designee.

16. The president of Enterprise Corporation of the Delta and Hope Community Credit Union (ECD/HOPE) or his designee.

17. A representative of the Louisiana Food Bank Association.

18. The executive director of the Big River Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance (BREADA) or her designee.

19. Three representatives of communities that lack adequate access to fresh food retail to be designated by the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chair of the Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs Committee shall serve as chair of the Healthy Food Retail Study Group.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group at its organizational meeting shall elect such other officers as it determines necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Prevention Research Center at Tulane University shall provide a recorder to serve without compensation as the need may arise.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any official action of the study group shall require the affirmative approval of the majority of the quorum present and voting, a majority of the appointed members constituting a quorum.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative members thereof shall receive the per diem and mileage provided by committees by the rules of the Senate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group shall make a written report of its findings to the Senate of the Louisiana Legislature by March 1, 2009.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE