

Rep. Kathleen Law offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 156.

A resolution to encourage Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture to implement food policies that promote healthy food, farms, and communities by encouraging local production of fruits and vegetables by specialty crop farmers.

Whereas, The federal Farm Bill traditionally provides crop subsidies to corn, wheat, soybean, and cotton farmers, and less than 40 percent of all United States farmers and ranchers actually receive any kind of subsidy from the federal government. However, there are many different kinds of farmers, both in Michigan and nationwide, growing nutritious and affordable fruits and vegetables that are vital to the health and well-being of Americans. The real price of fruits and vegetables has increased by 40 percent since 1985, while the cost of junk food and sodas has declined by as much as 20 percent. Government support must emphasize nutritious, affordable, and locally available foods; and

Whereas, The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Farm Bill) encourages institutions participating in the school lunch program to purchase locally produced foods for school meals. Purchasing locally grown produce and other foods supports local farmers and benefits students in need of high quality, nutritious food products. However, the USDA continues to discourage efforts by schools and other institutions to develop these important programs. The USDA claims that 7 CFR 3016.60(c) clearly prohibits the use of state or local geographic preferences and that all purchases are to be made competitively; and

Whereas, The Community Food Projects, a federally funded program designed to fight food insecurity through development of local food projects, promotes self-sufficiency of low-income communities. Grants from this program support Detroit-area nonprofits and Detroit residents in growing fresh vegetables in their neighborhoods. Funding is also used to provide entrepreneurship training to urban farmers, again encouraging local specialty crop farmers in Michigan. However, an increase in funding for the Community Food Projects would have even a greater impact on efforts to promote healthy, locally grown foods in low-income communities; and

Whereas, The emphasis on traditional crops in the allocation of farm subsidies has resulted in a loss of fruit and vegetable farmers as well as a decrease in the acreage of prime farmland used for farming nationwide. At the current rate, Michigan will lose 15 percent of its agricultural land by 2040, including 25 percent of the acreage used to grow fruit and 36 percent of the acreage used to grow dry beans; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we encourage Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture to implement food policies that promote healthy food, farms, and communities by encouraging local production of fruits and vegetables by specialty crop farmers; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.