

Regular Session, 2010

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 173

BY REPRESENTATIVE RITCHIE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development to meet and function as a joint committee to study and make recommendations for the establishment of a comprehensive Rural Economic Development Initiative Program designed to provide members of all Louisiana communities the opportunity to establish and operate economically viable and sustainable local food-related and energy-related business enterprises.

WHEREAS, there is an enormous opportunity for meaningful and sustainable economic development in Louisiana and a large market share to be gained by focusing on adding value to Louisiana produced, processed, packaged, marketed, and utilized sources of food and bio-fuels; and

WHEREAS, according to current statistics posted by the USDA's Economic Research Service, less than one-half of one percent of the food consumed by Louisiana's 4.3 million citizens is produced in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the citizens, businesses, and state of Louisiana need a sustainable rural, food- and energy-focused, agricultural- and forestry-based economic development plan that encompasses all sixty-four parishes of the state; and

WHEREAS, in order to achieve this highly desirable result, legislation is required to set in motion the utilization of the seven existing Resource, Conservation, and Development Councils of Louisiana (RC & D's), through the Louisiana Association of RC & D Councils, to organize and administer marketing strategies in such a way as to advance the concept and practice of Louisiana citizens consuming local foods and utilizing locally produced energy, with a focus on a larger percentage of the food and bio-energy products produced in the state to be consumed and utilized in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, a study committee shall be created with the following objectives:

(1) To identify a dedicated funding source for a period of not less than ten consecutive years, beginning in 2011 or earlier in the amount of \$1 million per parish, per year.

(2) To formulate the plans and budgets for the Louisiana Association of RC & D Councils to implement and administer the plan using guidelines from similar programs developed in other states such as Kentucky and Tennessee.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development to meet and function as a joint committee to study and make recommendations for the establishment of a comprehensive Rural Economic Development Initiative Program designed to provide members of all Louisiana communities the opportunity to establish and operate economically viable and sustainable local food-related and energy-related business enterprises.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the joint committee shall specifically examine the following:

(1) A dedicated funding source which could provide for a period of not less than ten consecutive years, beginning in 2011 or earlier, the amount of one million dollars per parish, per year.

(2) Potential plans and budgets for the Louisiana Association of Resource, Conservation, and Development Councils using guidelines from similar programs developed in other states, such as Kentucky and Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the joint committee shall solicit input, recommendations, and advice from the following:

(1)

The Department of Economic Development.

(2)

The Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

(3)

The Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation.

(4)

The LSU AgCenter.

(5)

The Southern University Ag Center.

(6)

The Louisiana Forestry Association.

(7)

The Louisiana Cattlemen's Association.

(8)

The Louisiana Vegetables and Fruit Growers Association.

(9)

The AgriBusiness Council of Louisiana.

(10)

The Louisiana Association of Resource, Conservation, and Development Councils.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a written report of the committee's findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for legislation relative to the issue, be submitted to the legislature no later than sixty days prior to the start of the 2011 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE