A Resolution encouraging state and local governments to increase the direct purchase of nutritious and healthy food from local and regional producers, including through Iowa’s regional food systems.

WHEREAS, Iowa’s Regional Food Systems Working Group, comprised of 15 geographically based groups covering 91 Iowa counties, is a network established in 2003 to support Iowans who are working together to build more resilient food systems; and

WHEREAS, each regional group convenes multiple stakeholders, including farm producers, food processors, and other businesses, nonprofit organizations, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, resource conservation and development organizations, educational institutions, and other state and local government entities to support local and regional food system development; and

WHEREAS, in 2011 Iowa Acts, chapter 128, the General Assembly created the Local Food and Farm Program and the Local Food and Farm Program Fund administered by the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, to support the diversification of Iowa agriculture and Iowa’s economy through the development of integrated...
1 local food systems to promote the production, sale, and
2 consumption of food grown in Iowa; and
3 WHEREAS, beginning in 2011, the General Assembly has
4 annually appropriated moneys to support the Local Food
5 and Farm Program administered under Iowa Code chapter
6 267A; and
7 WHEREAS, according to a 2014 report published by
8 Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Iowa
9 farmers responding to a survey reported a more than 23
10 percent year-over-year increase in food sales through
11 direct-to-consumer transactions such as farmers’
12 markets and community-supported agriculture, as well
13 as through wholesalers and large-volume institutional
14 buyers such as grocery stores, restaurants, schools,
15 and hospitals; and
16 WHEREAS, according to a 2014 report published
17 by Iowa State University of Science and Technology,
18 larger-scale buyers of local foods responding to a
19 survey reported increased purchases in local food
20 sales totaling more than $22 million in 2012-2013,
21 with 80 percent of those annual sales made to just 37
22 buyers, for an average of almost $250,000 in local food
23 purchases per buyer per year; and
24 WHEREAS, according to a 2016 report published by
25 the Union of Concerned Scientists, if all intermediate
26 and institutional buyers in Iowa purchased local food
27 at the same level as survey respondents, more than $3
28 billion in new economic activity would be generated for
29 the state’s economy, supporting 16,997 midsize farms,
30 and supporting 178,000 total jobs in Iowa, including
WHEREAS, targeted government procurement policies have been successfully used to spur economic growth, increase employment, develop rural communities, foster the creation of value chain partnerships and promote small businesses, including businesses operated by families, young entrepreneurs, veterans, minorities, persons with disabilities, ex-offenders, and others underrepresented within the private sector; and WHEREAS, Iowa has established a successful high-profile precedent for using a procurement policy to promote Iowa agriculture through a commitment at all levels of government to use bio-based fuels; and WHEREAS, food policy councils have been established in several Iowa counties, including Dubuque, Johnson, Linn, Cass, and Woodbury counties, which have come together as the Iowa Food Policy Coalition, to identify local and state policies, programs and resources, as well as private sector initiatives, to develop local and regional food systems and infrastructure to fulfill the needs of both farm producers and food consumers; and WHEREAS, the Iowa Healthiest State Initiative instituted by Governor Terry Branstad, and supported by Governor Kim Reynolds, is dedicated to achieving the goal of making Iowa the healthiest state in the nation, and making "double up food bucks" for individuals receiving nutrition assistance a staple of its menu of programs; and WHEREAS, government procurement preferences focused
on small local food producers will have ancillary benefits, such as increasing the availability of fresher and healthier foods; improving nutrition among populations vulnerable to diabetes, obesity, and other chronic health conditions; reducing negative impacts associated with soil erosion and water pollution; as well as diminishing the use of energy resources associated with damaging climate impacts; NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

That the House of Representatives strongly encourages universities under the direction of the State Board of Regents to increase the direct purchase of nutritious and healthy food from local and regional producers, including through food hubs created with the support of Iowa's expanding Local Food and Farm Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives strongly encourages other state and local government entities including the Department of Administrative Services and agencies purchasing through that department, the Department for the Blind, community colleges, and the Department of Corrections and associated institutions, as well as counties, cities, and public schools to increase the direct purchase of nutritious and healthy food from local and regional producers, including through food hubs created with the support of Iowa's expanding Local Food and Farm Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives strongly encourages state and local
entities to establish procurement goals for the purchase of healthy and nutritious food grown by local and regional producers and to become active participants in a regional food system working group; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urges all public entities engaged in cooperative or coordinated food purchasing to establish procurement specifications requiring vendors to source a designated percentage of food from local and regional producers in order to be recognized as a qualified bidder; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the President of the State Board of Regents, the Director of the Department of Administrative Services, the Director of the Department for the Blind, the Director of the Department of Education, the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees, the Director of the Department of Corrections, the Iowa State Association of Counties, and the Iowa League of Cities.