

H.192

An act relating to encouraging use of local foods in Vermont's food system

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. ELECTRONIC BENEFIT MACHINES; FARMERS' MARKETS;

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' FUNDING

(a) The department for children and families will receive funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, Pub.L. 111-5, a portion of which is dedicated to administrative expenses of the 3SquaresVT (formerly food stamp) program.

(b) With respect to federal monies available to the department for children and families under the ARRA, the general assembly directs the department to dedicate at least \$35,000.00 for the purpose of helping Vermont farmers' markets cover the costs of electronic benefit machines and related expenses, or to use the money for other administrative programs that facilitate access to healthy local foods.

Sec. 2. MILK AND MEAT PILOT PROGRAM

(a) The commissioner of education, the secretary of agriculture, food and markets, and the secretary of human services shall work with Vermont's congressional delegation to design the reauthorization of the federal Child

Nutrition Act to create a milk and meat pilot program in Vermont. The pilot program should be designed to:

(1) test the feasibility of and options for centralized statewide purchasing of local milk and meat for school meals; and

(2) offer technical assistance and training to school staff regarding sourcing, use, storage, and preparation of local foods.

(b) On or before January 15, 2010, the commissioner and secretaries shall report to the senate and house committees on agriculture on the success of their negotiations with the congressional delegation.

Sec. 3. FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GRANT PROGRAM;

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(a) The department of education has received funding through the federal fresh fruit and vegetable grant program to increase the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables and promote the nutritional health of schoolchildren.

However, some of the schools receiving these funds have been unable to maximize their use due to lack of storage equipment, staff to administer the programs, staff to process the foods, or knowledge about how to optimize consumption of the fresh foods by young children. Therefore, the general assembly hereby directs the department of education to work with school districts and supervisory unions to identify ARRA funds they or the department will receive in fiscal year 2010 to determine if any may be used to

provide the resources or technical assistance to schools that will help them maximize the purchase and use of local fruits and vegetables under the fresh fruit and vegetable grant program.

(b) On or before January 15, 2010, the commissioner of education shall report to the senate and house committees on agriculture on the success of finding and using funds to help to implement the fresh fruit and vegetable grant program.

Sec. 4. 10 V.S.A. § 494 is amended to read:

§ 494. EXEMPT SIGNS

The following signs are exempt from the requirements of this chapter except as indicated in section 495 of this title:

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(12) Directional signs, subject to regulations adopted by the Federal Highway Administration with a total surface area not to exceed ~~four~~ six square feet providing directions to places of business offering for sale agricultural products harvested or produced on the premises where the sale is taking place, or to farmers' markets that are members of the Vermont farmers market association selling Vermont agricultural products.

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(15) Municipal informational and guidance signs. A municipality may provide alternative signs of a guidance or informational nature and creative

design to assist persons in reaching destinations that are transportation centers, geographic districts, historic monuments and significant or unique educational, recreational or cultural landmarks, including farmers markets that are members of the Vermont farmers market association selling Vermont agricultural products, provided that such destinations are not private, for-profit enterprises.

A proposal to provide alternative signs shall contain color, shape and sign placement requirements that shall be of a uniform nature within the municipality. The surface area of alternative signs shall not exceed 12 square feet, and the height of such signs shall not exceed 12 feet in height. The proposal shall be approved by the municipal planning commission for submission to and adoption by the local legislative body. Alternative signs shall be responsive to the particular needs of the municipality and to the values expressed in this chapter. These proposals shall be subject to and consistent with any plan duly adopted pursuant to chapter 117 of Title 24, shall be enforced under the provisions of 24 V.S.A. §§ 4444 and 4445 and may emphasize each municipality's special characteristics. No fees shall be assessed against a municipality that provides signs under this section and, upon issuance of permits under section 1111 of Title 19, such signs may be placed in any public right-of-way other than interstates. This section shall take effect upon the travel information council securing permission for alternative municipal signs in accordance with section 1029 of Title 23.

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(17) Within a downtown district designated under the provisions of 24 V.S.A. chapter 76A, municipal information and guidance signs. A municipality may erect alternative signs to provide guidance or information to assist persons in reaching destinations that are transportation centers, geographic districts, and significant or unique educational, recreational, historic or cultural landmarks, including farmers markets that are members of the Vermont farmers market association selling Vermont agricultural products. A proposal to provide alternative signs shall contain color, shape and sign placement requirements that shall be uniform within the municipality. The surface area of alternative signs shall not exceed 12 square feet, and the highest point of such signs shall not exceed 12 feet above the ground, road surface or sidewalk. The proposal shall be approved by the municipal planning commission for submission to and adoption by the local legislative body. The sign proposal then shall be submitted to the travel information council for final approval. Denial may be based only on safety considerations. Reasons for denial shall be stated in writing. Alternative signs shall be responsive to the particular needs of the municipality and to the values expressed in this chapter. These proposals shall be subject to and consistent with any municipal plan duly adopted pursuant to chapter 117 of Title 24, shall be enforced under the provisions of 24 V.S.A. §§ 4444 and 4445 and may emphasize each

municipality's special characteristics. No fees shall be assessed against a municipality that provides signs under this section and upon issuance of permits under section 1111 of Title 19, such signs may be placed in any public right-of-way other than an interstate highway. Notwithstanding subdivision 495(a)(7) or any other provision of this title or of section 1029 of Title 23, alternative signs permitted under this subsection shall not be required to comply with any nationally recognized standard.