

No. R-231. Joint resolution supporting the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' proposal to adopt an administrative rule to implement international maple grading standards in Vermont.

(J.R.S.14)

By Committee on Agriculture,

Whereas, maple sugaring is important economically and culturally in Vermont, and

Whereas, the special status in Vermont of maple-flavored products is epitomized in 1 V.S.A. § 510, designating maple from the Vermont sugar maple tree as the state flavor, and

Whereas, the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (the Agency) has estimated that in the year 2000, there were 2,000 maple syrup producers operating one million taps, and the comparable estimates for the year 2012 were 3,000 producers and 3.3 million taps, and

Whereas, the Agency further reported that with new technology, the average tap, over the course of a sugaring season, now yields approximately one-half gallon of maple syrup, double the former standard of one quart per tap, and

Whereas, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Vermont exceeds any other American state in the production of maple syrup as indicated by the fact that in 2012, 750,000 gallons of maple syrup were produced in the State while the nearest competitors, Maine and New York, each produced 360,000 gallons, and

Whereas, the USDA also indicates that the revenue derived nationally from Vermont maple syrup sales in 2011 was approximately \$39.9 million, representing more than one-third of all sales of maple syrup produced in the United States, and

Whereas, these production and revenue statistics demonstrate the importance to our State's economy of Vermont maple syrup sales beyond the State's borders, and

Whereas, historically, Vermont has used a system of grading unique to this State which is familiar to in-state purchasers of Vermont maple syrup, and

Whereas, although Vermont maple syrup producers are proud of the State's unique maple grading standards, Vermont should adopt the international standards in order to enable our state to remain the nation's leading source for maple syrup, and

Whereas, the Agency is initiating a rule adoption process to adopt the international standards, and

Whereas, the Agency's proposal would preserve important marketing attributes of Vermont maple syrup, including the retention of the existing density requirement which is higher than the standard of any other state or Canadian province and the inclusion of the word Vermont on the label as is presently required; and for sales within Vermont, maple syrup producers would be allowed to list both the international and traditional Vermont grades, and

Whereas, the 1,000-member Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association, the Maple Industry Committee of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association, the Franklin County Sugar Makers' Association, the Vermont Agriculture and Forest Products Development Board, and the Vermont Farm Bureau are each supportive of the Agency's adoption of the international maple grading standard, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly supports the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' proposal to adopt an administrative rule to implement international maple grading standards in Vermont, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Chuck Ross, Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets, to the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association, to the Maple Industry Committee of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association, to the Franklin County Maple Sugar Makers' Association, to the Vermont Agricultural and Forest Products Development Board, and to the Vermont Farm Bureau.