

2025 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 124

BY SENATOR MCMATH

FARMING. Expresses support for Louisiana farmers in light of ongoing market fluctuations, staffing changes, and funding cuts to state and local departments at the federal level.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To express Louisiana's support for farmers, specifically farmers growing specialty crops, in
3 light of ongoing market fluctuations, staffing changes, and funding cuts to state and
4 local departments at the federal level.

5 WHEREAS, the Louisiana agricultural community is a vital part of the state's
6 economy, providing food, jobs, and resources that are essential to the livelihoods of
7 thousands of farmers and families; and

8 WHEREAS, according to Louisiana State University, the agricultural sector
9 contributes nearly twenty-six billion dollars to the state's economy; and

10 WHEREAS, specialty crops, as defined by the United States Department of
11 Agriculture (USDA) to include fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and
12 nursery crops, are essential to the health and well-being of Louisianians and are a vital
13 economic driver in the state, but market stabilization programs are less likely to support
14 specialty crop producers who grow these important crops such as strawberries, sweet
15 potatoes, figs, pecans, tomatoes, mirliton, and okra; and

16 WHEREAS, in early 2025 the USDA halted over one billion dollars in federal
17 funding for programs that help schools and food banks purchase food from local farmers,
18 ranchers, and agricultural producers, making it difficult for food banks and schools to afford

1 Louisiana-grown produce for local families and schoolchildren; and

2 WHEREAS, the USDA's Local Food for Schools and Local Food Purchase
3 Assistance programs, operating from 2022 to 2024, allowed schools and food banks to buy
4 food from local growers, ensuring that Louisiana's children and families received
5 locally-sourced, minimally-processed vegetables, fruits, and meats; and

6 WHEREAS, the cancellation of these programs will result in the loss of
7 approximately six million three hundred eighty thousand dollars in funding for food banks
8 and eleven million seven hundred thousand dollars in funding for schools and childcare
9 centers in Louisiana; and

10 WHEREAS, the USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance agreement, along with its
11 expansion (LFPA Plus), allocated about ten million six hundred thousand dollars for food
12 purchases through a partnership between the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and
13 Forestry (LDAF) and food banks, allowing LDAF to purchase fresh produce, meats, seafood,
14 and rice from local growers; and

15 WHEREAS, this partnership was expected to impact two hundred thousand people
16 across Louisiana and facilitate the purchase of four million five hundred thousand pounds
17 of local food over the three-year grant period; and

18 WHEREAS, without these federal programs, food banks will be forced to purchase
19 more food from out-of-state vendors, reducing their ability to serve local populations, and
20 the loss of USDA funding will cost Louisiana farmers millions in sales and exacerbate food
21 insecurity in the state, especially among low-income families and schoolchildren who benefit
22 from these programs; and

23 WHEREAS, these programs have been instrumental in helping local farmers
24 establish contracts with institutional buyers, expand market reach, and increase financial
25 stability, while also providing fresh, nutritious, and locally grown food for Louisiana's
26 institutions and invest in on farm processing for value-added products; and

27 WHEREAS, the cancellation of federal support for these programs has put additional
28 pressure on Louisiana's agricultural community, particularly small and medium-sized
29 producers, who rely on institutional relationships to stay competitive in an increasingly
30 challenging market; and

