

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 205

BY REPRESENTATIVE MCFARLAND

A RESOLUTION

To commend and express support for Louisiana farmers for their commitment in providing healthy food options, sustaining local economies, and promoting agricultural resilience through their dedication and innovation and their contributions to ensuring access to nutritious food despite ongoing market fluctuations, staffing changes, and funding cuts to state and local departments at the federal level.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana agricultural community plays a critical role in the state's economy by providing food, jobs, and resources that sustain the livelihoods of thousands of farmers; and

WHEREAS, in early 2025, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) halted over \$1 billion in federal funding for programs that help schools and food banks purchase food from local farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers, making it difficult for food banks and schools to afford Louisiana-grown produce for local families and schoolchildren; and

WHEREAS, the USDA's Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS) and the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) allowed schools and food banks to buy food from local growers, ensuring that Louisiana's children and families received locally-sourced and minimally-processed fruits, vegetables, and meats; and

WHEREAS, the cancellation of these programs will result in the loss of approximately \$6.38 million in funding for food banks and \$11.7 million in funding for schools and childcare centers in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the USDA's LFPA agreement, along with its expansion (LFPA Plus), allocated approximately \$10.6 million for food purchases through a partnership between the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) and the food banks which

enabled the LDAF to purchase fresh produce, meats, seafood, and rice from local growers; and

WHEREAS, this partnership was expected to impact approximately two hundred thousand people across Louisiana and facilitate the purchase of 4.5 million pounds of local food over the three-year grant period; and

WHEREAS, the loss of USDA funding will cost Louisiana farmers millions in sales and exacerbate food insecurity in the state, especially among low-income families and schoolchildren who benefit from these programs; and

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

WHEREAS, Louisiana's schools, universities, hospitals, and other institutions are major consumers of food products, purchasing from local farmers and food producers, strengthening the state's food system; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has the opportunity to continue supporting its farmers in the face of these federal cuts by creating and expanding state-level initiatives and funding mechanisms that prioritize farm-to-institution purchasing and strengthen local food systems.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana hereby commends and expresses support for Louisiana farmers for their commitment to providing healthy food options, sustaining local economies, and promoting agricultural resilience through their dedication and innovation and their contributions to ensuring access to nutritious food despite ongoing market fluctuations, staffing changes, and funding cuts to state and local departments at the federal level.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the executive director of Farmers First of Louisiana.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES