

Chapter No. 464
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HOUSE BILL NO. 718

Originated in House  Clerk

HOUSE BILL NO. 718

AN ACT TO CREATE AN INTERAGENCY FARM TO SCHOOL COUNCIL TO FACILITATE THE PROCUREMENT AND USE OF LOCALLY GROWN AND LOCALLY RAISED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN SCHOOL MEALS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF FOOD SERVED IN SCHOOLS AND TO SUPPORT THE STATE ECONOMY BY GENERATING NEW INCOME FOR MISSISSIPPI FARMERS; TO DESCRIBE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL; TO SET FORTH THE DUTIES AND PURPOSES OF THE COUNCIL; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. (1) There is created an Interagency Farm to School Council, to identify models and methods of promoting farm to school programs in the state in order to improve the availability of healthy, fresh foods in schools and to promote the economic development of Mississippi farmers and food producers.

(2) The council shall be composed of the following members:

(a) One (1) person who represents the State Department of Education, appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Education;

(b) One (1) person who represents the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce;

(c) One (1) person who represents the State Department of Health, appointed by the State Health Officer;

(d) One (1) person who represents the Mississippi State University Extension Program;

(e) One (1) person who represents the Alcorn State University Extension Program;

(f) One (1) person who represents food service directors in Mississippi public schools, appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Education;

(g) One (1) person who represents a nonprofit organization in Mississippi working to promote farm to school programs, appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce;

(h) One (1) person who represents poultry producers in Mississippi, appointed by the President of the Mississippi Poultry Association;

(i) One (1) person who represents the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.

(3) In appointing members of the council, the appointing authority shall ensure that the members reflect the diversity of this state, with members representing rural areas, urban areas and different geographical regions of the state.

(4) The council is charged with facilitating the creation and growth of farm to school programs in communities throughout the State of Mississippi through studying, recommending and

administering best practices for creating farm to school programs. This can be accomplished with actions including, but not limited to:

(a) Creating and administering an assessment or survey designed to evaluate what specific programs or efforts would be the most effective in increasing the number of farm to school programs in the State of Mississippi;

(b) Helping to develop and expand local pilot farm to school programs in Mississippi;

(c) Notifying and assisting interested schools, farms, and community organizations in applying for funding sources and grants related to supporting and decreasing the cost of purchasing locally grown and locally raised agricultural products to serve in school meals;

(d) Assisting Mississippi farmers in marketing and building commercial relationships with food service directors in schools;

(e) Developing or administering training programs for Mississippi farmers related to marketing crops, food safety, processing crops, business management, liability and risk management, and any other topics deemed appropriate by the council;

(f) Working with the Mississippi Department of Education Office of Child Nutrition to assist school food service directors in creating and amending school procedures, procurement

forms, proper handling, preparing and storing procedures in order to facilitate the purchase of locally grown and locally raised agricultural products to be served in school meals;

(g) Developing or assisting an organization in developing a website that lists schools and farmers interested in participating in farm to school programs, promotes farm to school events and programs throughout the state and promotes communication and sales between Mississippi farmers and schools; and

(h) Encouraging schools, community organizations, restaurants, grocery retail stores and other local organizations and businesses to purchase more locally grown and locally raised agricultural products to serve or sell through their businesses in order to support and increase local farmers' capacity to grow and produce food for commercial purposes.

(5) The council should hold its first meeting no later than August 1, 2013, with the date, time and location of this first meeting to be determined jointly by the members serving on the council. At the first meeting, the council shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, and any other officers deemed necessary, from its members. The council shall meet periodically but no less than four (4) times per year.

(6) Members of the council shall serve without compensation or reimbursement for their expenses related to participating in the council, and the council shall function without appropriations

or state funds. However, the council can accept funds that may be offered as financial grants from public or private sources. The Mississippi State Legislature and any department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the state, or of any political subdivision thereof, may provide, at the request of the chair of the council, such facilities, assistance and data as will enable the council to carry out its duties.

(7) The council shall report its progress and findings to the Education Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Agriculture Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Public Health and Human Services Committee of the House of Representatives, the Public Health and Welfare Committee of the Senate, or any successor committees, on or before January 1, 2015, and once annually in each following year in which the council is convened.

(8) The provisions of this section shall stand repealed from and after July 1, 2015.

SECTION 2. For purposes of this act, the following terms shall have the meanings herein ascribed unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(a) "Council" means the Interagency Farm to School Council created in Section 1 of this act.

(b) "Farm to school program" means any commercial relationship where a school purchases locally grown or locally raised agricultural products to serve in school meals and can

include educational programs for students on local agriculture and nutrition;

(c) "Locally grown or locally raised agricultural products" means any food products grown on Mississippi farms or gardens, and includes, but is not limited to, fruits, vegetables, and nuts grown in Mississippi, meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, seafood and other aquatic products produced in Mississippi, and products processed into value-added products that are grown or produced in Mississippi;

(d) "School" means any K-12 accredited public or private institution for learning and also includes public and private preschools.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

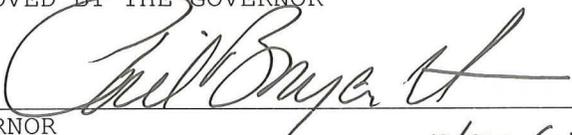
PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 7, 2013


SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PASSED BY THE SENATE
March 7, 2013


PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR


GOVERNOR

3/20/13
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