

2017 -- S 0908

LC002724

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

SENATE RESOLUTION

**CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE DAY AND NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK IN THE
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, Ruggerio, Algieri, Lombardi, and Archambault

Date Introduced: May 17, 2017

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The basis of the American economy at its founding, and for many years
2 thereafter, was rooted in an agrarian society, an important legacy for Americans to remember; and

3 WHEREAS, Agriculture as an industry has actively pursued new methods and
4 technologies which not only increase productivity, but also conserve natural resources.
5 Agriculture contributes to environmentally friendly efforts by producing crops suitable for
6 making biodegradable plastics, by recycling chemical containers, feed bags and food by-products;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The first Agriculture Day was celebrated in 2001, making this year the 16th
9 annual Agriculture Day in Rhode Island; and

10 WHEREAS, Rhode Island is home to 1,243 farms, an increase of 44 percent since 2002,
11 and nearly 70,000 acres in our state are currently devoted to farmland. However, according to the
12 Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), the state has lost 80 percent of
13 its farmland since 1940, more than anywhere else in the nation over the same period of time; and

14 WHEREAS, The top agricultural commodities in the state are greenhouse and nursery
15 products, dairy products, sweet corn, aquaculture (seafood), and apples; and

16 WHEREAS, According to the federal Census of Agriculture, Rhode Island has the
17 highest percentage of beginning farmers in the nation. Beginning farmers are estimated to make
18 up over 31 percent of all principal farm operators in our state, compared to 25 percent in 2007;
19 and

1 WHEREAS, In 2002, the average farm size was 56 acres and the median farm size was
2 24 acres. Today, the number of farms with less than 9 acres has increased and accounts for 35
3 percent of all farms, while the number of farms with between 10 and 49 acres and between 50 and
4 179 acres has decreased, and the number of farms with 180 acres or more has increased; and

5 WHEREAS, Agriculture is a way of life for many Americans and Rhode Islanders.
6 Currently, women principal farm operators account for 25 percent of the principal farm operators,
7 up from 24 percent in 2007, and the average age of the principal operator of a Rhode Island farm
8 was 56.3 years in 2007, and 56.7 years in 2002; and

9 WHEREAS, Rhode Island ranks 3rd with 30.2 percent in a study of Direct Market Sales
10 for farms in New England States, and 2nd with 10.5 percent in a ranking of Direct Market Sales as
11 a percent of farm sales; and

12 WHEREAS, Agriculture Day and National Agriculture Week provides an opportunity to
13 highlight the role agriculture plays in supplying safe, abundant and affordable produce and
14 products; now, therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
16 hereby celebrates Agriculture Day and National Agriculture Week in our State. We moreover
17 thank the women and men of agriculture who dedicate themselves to providing for all Americans
18 the most affordable food and fiber supply in the world; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
20 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Janet Coit, Director Rhode Island Department
21 of Environmental Management.

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