

2016 -- S 2176

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE RHODE ISLAND COMMERCE CORPORATION TO WORK JOINTLY WITH THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND LABOR AND TRAINING TO ESTABLISH JOB DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES THAT ENCOURAGE COMPANIES THAT PRODUCE, PROCESS, DISTRIBUTE, AND ADD VALUE TO RHODE ISLAND AGRICULTURAL AND SEAFOOD PRODUCTS TO EITHER EXPAND OR LOCATE IN THE STATE

Introduced By: Senators Pearson, Sosnowski, Metts, Algieri, and Kettle

Date Introduced: January 27, 2016

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

1 WHEREAS, The agricultural and seafood industries are two of Rhode Island's most
2 important and growing economic sectors, spanning a wide range of public and private enterprises,
3 and generating over \$1.2 billion in economic activity in Rhode Island on an annual basis; and

4 WHEREAS, According to recent data, the agriculture and seafood industries employ over
5 12,000 directly and indirectly in Rhode Island; and

6 WHEREAS, In recognition of the need for greater focus upon economic development
7 and job creation in Rhode Island, the General Assembly established the Rhode Island Commerce
8 Corporation in 2013; and

9 WHEREAS, The mission of the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation includes, but is not
10 limited to, promoting the preservation, expansion, and sound development of new and existing
11 industry, business, commerce, agriculture, tourism, and recreational facilities in the state. This in
12 turn will promote the economic development of the state and the general welfare of its citizens, as
13 well as a healthy and growing economy, thereby encouraging new industries and commercial
14 enterprises to locate in the state, enabling existing industries and commercial enterprises to
15 remain and expand, and alleviating the condition of unemployment and underemployment that
16 now exists; and

17 WHEREAS, During the 2015 legislative session, the General Assembly both enabled and

1 funded the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation's efforts, specifically in Article 19 of the Fiscal
2 2016 Budget, producing over \$65 million of new jobs related incentives; and

3 WHEREAS, A recent economic study by the Brookings Institute entitled, "Rhode Island
4 Innovates A Competitive Strategy for the Ocean State," targeted the Food Processing Industry as
5 an "Advanced Industry Growth Area" being already strongly positioned in the state with a 32
6 percent higher level of industry concentration than the nation, and employment growth of 16
7 percent from 2009-2013, which significantly exceeds national employment growth of 3.8 percent;
8 and,

9 WHEREAS, By connecting Rhode Island's growing food manufacturing industry with
10 core competencies in food and health found at local colleges and universities and Rhode Island's
11 1240 farms, there exists significant potential for continued strong economic and jobs growth; and,

12 WHEREAS, The Commerce Corporation has the tools to help:

13 (1) Sustain and grow new or expanded agricultural production including aquaculture and
14 commercial fishing in our state;

15 (2) Foster new collaborations among Rhode Island food businesses, organizations or
16 enterprises; and

17 (3) Support both existing and new demand and sales channels with clearly defined
18 markets; and

19 WHEREAS, The same Brookings Institute report further cites synergistic benefits
20 derived from upgrading warehousing capabilities for cold storage at Rhode Island's ports,
21 offering a potential boost to Rhode Island's food manufacturing industry; now, therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
23 hereby respectfully requests the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation work jointly with the
24 Rhode Island Departments of Environmental Management and Labor and Training to establish
25 job development incentives that encourage companies that produce, process, distribute, and add
26 value to Rhode Island agriculture and seafood products to either expand or locate in the state; and
27 be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
29 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Governor Gina M. Raimondo, the Chair of the
30 Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of
31 Environmental Management, and the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and
32 Training.

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