

**No. R-501. Joint resolution relating to federal agriculture policy.**

(J.R.S.62)

By Senate Committee on Agriculture,

*Whereas*, the dairy industry, a keystone industry in Vermont and the United States, supports rural communities, water recharge areas, valuable open space, recreational and sports opportunities, and tourism, and

*Whereas*, the dairy industry has an economic impact of an estimated \$14,000.00 per cow per year, primarily in the local economy, and

*Whereas*, the instability of fluid milk prices, the concentration of processing capacity, outdated regulations, and labor shortages are creating a crisis in the industry, and

*Whereas*, a significant loss of capacity would create a dependence on imported milk and other dairy products, would cause prices to consumers to increase, and would reduce our nation's food security, now therefore be it

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to acknowledge the importance of the dairy industry nationwide as well as the unique aspects of the dairy industry region by region through:

(1) addressing the problems of labor shortages within the dairy industry by providing more opportunity for training and education as well as a fair and sensible approach to migrant labor;

(2) adopting legislation that creates a uniform definition of the ownership of milk as it leaves the farm;

(3) ensuring that all dairy producers receive, with reasonable advance notice, the information related to any referendum on the federal milk marketing orders and that they have the opportunity to cast individual ballots on such a referendum;

(4) supporting the dairy section of the current proposed federal farm bill to include Dairy Gross Margin Insurance directly tied to the Dairy Stabilization Program to stabilize the price and provide an adequate safety net for Vermont dairy producers; and

(5) supporting an effective supply management program that utilizes a fixed base, which is critical to reforming the current dairy safety net and that in combination with the current Milk Income Loss contract program would provide a fiscally responsible way to manage risk in dairy production, *and be it further*

**Resolved:** That the General Assembly urges the U.S. Department of Justice and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to inquire into the concentration in the milk processing sectors of the dairy industry and to determine whether anticompetitive conduct is working to the detriment of producers and consumers, *and be it further*

**Resolved:** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, to U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Corporation

Chairman Gary Gensler, to Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets Chuck Ross, and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.