

2012 -- H 8264

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

HOUSE RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING RHODY FRESH FARMERS

Introduced By: Representatives Naughton, Walsh, Valencia, Gallison, and Kennedy

Date Introduced: June 12, 2012

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It's hard to imagine that the delicious milk in the now-so-familiar blue
2 carton that we pick up at our local grocery store each week wasn't available just nine short years
3 ago; and

4 WHEREAS, For many years, farmers across our country have been struggling to stay on
5 their land due to numerous economic and social factors. Rhode Island alone had almost 80 dairy
6 farms in the not-so-distant past; and

7 WHEREAS, In 2002, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management,
8 Division of Agriculture awarded the dairy farmers in Rhode Island a \$21,370 USDA Farm
9 Viability Grant. This grant started the ball rolling for Rhody Fresh Milk. In 2004, on the brink of
10 extinction, a group of local farmers, who were deeply committed to farming and the traditions
11 and values that it promotes, joined forces to save Rhode Island's dairy farms and thus, Rhody
12 Fresh was on its way; and

13 WHEREAS, Rhody Fresh Milk is produced by the Rhode Island Dairy Farmers
14 Cooperative, an alliance originally consisting of five farmers. These founding farmers include
15 Barry James of Tomaquag Farm in Westerly, Louie Escobar of Highland Farm in Portsmouth,
16 Glen Cottrell of Cottrell Homestead in West Kingston, Melissa Breene of Breene Hollow Farm in
17 West Greenwich, and Scooter LaPrise of Emma Acres in Exeter; and

18 WHEREAS, The Rhody Fresh Cooperative has grown to encompass nine dairy farms
19 located throughout the state and now includes Kevin Breene and his son, Steven, and daughter,
20 Melissa, of Breene Hollow Farm in West Greenwich, Trina and Gary Marsh of Elmrock Farm,

1 Scooter and Cynthia LaPrise of Emma Acres in Exeter, and Rodney Bailey and his son, Paul, of
2 The Baily Brook Farm; and

3 WHEREAS, This grass roots effort could not have succeeded without tremendous
4 sacrifices such as that of the Escobars of Highland Farm, who used their farm as collateral for an
5 EDC loan to cover startup costs, and the involvement of individuals like Ken Ayars, Chief of the
6 Division of Agriculture, as well as the support of agencies like Rhode Island Department of
7 Environmental Management, who were vitally important to the success of Rhody Fresh; and

8 WHEREAS, Because of the grass roots efforts of these Rhody Fresh Farmers and in
9 response to the increasing demand for locally-produced food, the Cooperative will be expanding
10 its dairy production to include products like butter and cheese; and

11 WHEREAS, Rhody Fresh farmers are responsible for providing the necessities of
12 everyday life for many of us and their passionate commitment to agriculture and our state has
13 distinguished them as persons worthy of our utmost admiration and gratitude; now, therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
15 Providence Plantations hereby honors and applauds Rhody Fresh Farmers and all those
16 individuals who assisted in quenching Rhode Islanders' thirst for local agriculture; and be it
17 further

18 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
19 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Barry James, Louie Escobar, Glen Cottrell,
20 Melissa Breene, Scooter LaPrise, Ken Ayars, Chief of the Division of Agriculture, and the
21 Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

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