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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The State of Illinois is home to diverse urban, suburban, and rural communities whose economic vitality, public health, and environmental sustainability are deeply interconnected; and

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WHEREAS, Certain urban communities, specifically disproportionately impacted urban communities that have experienced historic and ongoing disinvestment, economic exclusion, environmental burdens, and limited access to opportunity share many of the same structural challenges as rural communities across Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Disproportionately impacted urban communities and rural communities alike face persistent disparities, including limited access to healthy and affordable food, insufficient access to healthcare services, inadequate infrastructure investment, workforce shortages, barriers to small business and farm viability, land access challenges, population decline or displacement, and restricted access to capital for local economic development; and

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WHEREAS, Food deserts and limited food-access conditions exist in both disproportionately impacted urban communities and rural communities, with urban neighborhoods often lacking

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1 full-service grocery stores and local food infrastructure and  
2 rural areas experiencing long travel distances to food  
3 retailers, loss of local grocers, limited transportation  
4 options, and insufficient distribution networks; and

5 WHEREAS, Rural communities often struggle with farm  
6 consolidation, aging infrastructure, loss of local markets,  
7 and population decline, while disproportionately impacted  
8 urban communities experience underemployment, lack of  
9 neighborhood-scale food infrastructure, and reduced access to  
10 fresh, locally produced food, conditions that differ in  
11 geography but stem from similar patterns of systemic neglect;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Illinois' food and agricultural economy would  
14 benefit from the intentional development and strengthening of  
15 urban-rural partnerships that better connect rural producers  
16 with disproportionately impacted urban communities, expand  
17 market access, support workforce development, and improve food  
18 security and economic opportunity across regions; and

19 WHEREAS, Educational institutions, workforce training  
20 programs, community-based organizations, and local governments  
21 are uniquely positioned to initiate and expand urban-rural  
22 partnerships by fostering shared learning, cross-regional  
23 collaboration, agricultural literacy, and inclusive career

1 pathways across food, agriculture, and related industries; and

2 WHEREAS, Policy decisions developed in isolation, without  
3 recognizing opportunities to build stronger connections  
4 between disproportionately impacted urban communities and  
5 rural communities, risk perpetuating inequities and weakening  
6 Illinois' long-term food-system and economic resilience;  
7 therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
9 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
10 these shared challenges and shared interests of  
11 disproportionately impacted urban communities and rural  
12 communities need to be addressed to develop and strengthen  
13 urban-rural partnerships and education to advance food  
14 systems, agriculture, and equitable economic development  
15 across Illinois; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That we urge State agencies, local governments,  
17 educational institutions, community-based organizations,  
18 farmers, workers, and small businesses to pursue new and  
19 expanded urban-rural partnerships that connect  
20 disproportionately impacted urban communities and rural  
21 communities through equitable food systems, workforce  
22 development, and local economic investment; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That we encourage education, outreach, and  
2 technical-assistance initiatives that promote agricultural  
3 literacy, food-system careers, entrepreneurship, and  
4 cross-regional understanding, with particular attention to  
5 disproportionately impacted urban communities and historically  
6 underserved rural areas; and be it further

7           RESOLVED, That we support policy frameworks that  
8 strengthen local and regional food infrastructure, protect  
9 farmland, expand urban agriculture in disproportionately  
10 impacted urban communities, improve market access, and address  
11 food-access gaps in both urban and rural communities; and be  
12 it further

13           RESOLVED, That we urge policymakers at all levels to  
14 reject false divisions between urban and rural Illinois and  
15 instead pursue inclusive, data-driven, and community-informed  
16 solutions that recognize collaboration and partnership as  
17 essential to the State's food security, economic resilience,  
18 and shared prosperity; and be it further

19           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
20 delivered to the Governor and all members of the Illinois  
21 Congressional Delegation as an expression of our commitment to  
22 building stronger urban-rural partnerships for the benefit of  
23 all Illinois residents.