

Joint Resolution Number 6889

A RESOLUTION TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE SECURITY OF OUR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM SO THAT IT IS BASED ON A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE WHICH ENHANCES THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND BUILDS REGIONAL SELF-RELIANCE AND SO THAT ALL CITIZENS HAVE ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS AND AFFORDABLE FOOD.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article II, section 3 of the Montana Constitution, entitled inalienable rights, all persons have certain inalienable Constitutional rights that include the right to a clean and healthful environment, pursuing life's basic necessities and seeking their safety, health and happiness in all lawful ways; and

WHEREAS, it is within the power and responsibilities of local governments in Montana to secure and promote the general public health, safety and general welfare of the individuals within their respective local government jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, a recent comprehensive study has identified a number of threats to and concerns about the long-term security of Missoula County's food and farming system; and

WHEREAS, a healthy agricultural system is a valuable part of our cultural heritage, contributing to open space, wildlife habitat, and other public benefits, and is integral to the long-term security of our food system; and

WHEREAS, Missoula County is losing many of its working farms and ranches due to problems associated with low economic returns from agriculture and pressures from development; and

WHEREAS, a major challenge in rebuilding our local food system is to devise strategies that will address the need for farmers and ranchers to earn a fair price for their products while maintaining consumer affordability; and

WHEREAS, the primary food-related concern of Missoula County citizens is food quality, such as food safety, pesticide residues on food and availability of organic and local foods; and

WHEREAS, cost of living issues, specifically low wages, pose significant barriers to accessing healthy, nutritious foods for low-income individuals and their families; transportation to food outlets is an emerging concern for low-income individuals; emergency food providers are seeing an ever increasing need for their services; and public social services remain underutilized; and

WHEREAS, there are many different organizations working individually on various issues regarding food and farming in Missoula County, no existing entity takes an integrated approach to solving these issues;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Missoula City Council and the Board of Missoula County Commissioners support the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Community Food and Agriculture Coalition, that addresses community needs related to food and agriculture in a comprehensive, systematic, and creative way.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Missoula City Council and the Board of Missoula County Commissioners shall each appoint from their respective governing body membership a city council member and a county commissioner to serve on the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition to share information among the Missoula City Council, Missoula County Commissioners, and the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Missoula City Council and the Board of Missoula County Commissioners support the development of a Food and Agriculture Policy that will contribute to the healthful and affordable eating patterns of all City and County residents and that will promote regional self-reliance through a sustainable agriculture that is environmentally sound, economically viable, socially responsible, and non-exploitative.

PASSED AND ADOPTED March _7_, 2005

/s/ Mike Kadas
Mike Kadas
Mayor

/s/ Martha L. Rehbein
Martha L. Rehbein
City Clerk

/s/ Jean Curtiss
Jean Curtiss
County Commissioner

/s/ Barbara Evans
Barbara Evans
County Commissioner

/s/ Bill Carey
Bill Carey
County Commissioner

/s/ Vickie Zeier
Vickie Zeier
Clerk and Recorder