SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A VOLUNTARY FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, farm to school programs improve the connection that communities have with fresh, nutritious food and local farmers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and preschools; and

WHEREAS, across the country, an increasing number of states have established farm to school programs; and

WHEREAS, a farm to school program supports the local economy and enriches school children's bodies and minds by bringing locally grown or raised foods into school cafeterias; providing educational activities that emphasize food, farming, and nutrition; and offering hands-on learning activities including school gardening, farm visits, and culinary classes; and

WHEREAS, Washington State's Department of Agriculture created a tool kit to assist the implementation of a farm to school program; and

WHEREAS, other states, including Ohio and Virginia, began farm to school programs with only one or two agricultural products; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Department of Agriculture's recent Farm to School Census, school districts participating in farm to school programs purchased and served over $385,000,000 in local food during the 2011-2012 school year, and more than half of the participating schools plan to increase local food purchases; and
WHEREAS, the Department of Education requires flexibility in implementing a farm to school program due to the challenges presented by the scale of the Department's food service needs and the requirement that farmers participating in the program be food safety certified; and

WHEREAS, there are many challenges and successes that come with the implementation of a farm to school program, and a statewide, one-size-fits-all approach may delay the implementation process; and

WHEREAS, allowing a single Department of Education Complex Area to implement a farm to school program, rather than requiring statewide implementation, will allow a Complex Area with the resources to implement a farm to school program to partner with its local farmers without delay; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2015, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Education is encouraged to establish the Hawaii Voluntary Farm to School Program to improve school children's access to nutritious foods in public educational institutions by providing Department of Education Complex Areas with the opportunity and option to purchase locally grown food for schools from food safety certified farms in the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a farmer providing products to a Department of Education Complex Area's farm to school program provide evidence that the farmer has an adequate supply of products to supply the Complex Area's farm to school program for one year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a farmer providing products to a Department of Education Complex Area's farm to school program be food safety certified and subject to all applicable state and federal food safety regulations, inspections, and audits and maintain sufficient product liability insurance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
Board of Education, Superintendent of Education, and Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.