

By: Rodriguez of Travis

H.R. No. 710

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Texans increasingly seek out locally sourced food  
2 products, but the availability of local meat and poultry is limited  
3 because small farms and ranches often lack access to small and  
4 midsize production facilities; and

5           WHEREAS, Over the past two decades, the meat processing  
6 industry in the United States has undergone massive consolidation,  
7 with just four corporations slaughtering about 80 percent of the  
8 cattle; facilities that process meat on this enormous scale are not  
9 geared to accommodate local producers due to mismatches in size,  
10 services, and business models; and

11           WHEREAS, Farmers and ranchers wishing to market meat and  
12 poultry locally need small-scale, state-inspected slaughter  
13 facilities, but this type of processing capacity is limited;  
14 federal regulations create a barrier to the operation of such  
15 facilities by requiring state inspection programs to enforce  
16 regulations "at least equal" to those imposed at the national  
17 level; current federal law regarding animal slaughter and meat  
18 processing, however, is chiefly designed to ensure the safety of  
19 corporate agribusiness, and regulations do not recognize the  
20 differing practices applicable to small producers; forcing smaller  
21 operations to use the same equipment as producers operating on a  
22 vast scale creates an onerous and inappropriate financial burden;  
23 and

24           WHEREAS, At present, despite consumer demand, the percentage

1 of direct sales of meat products is significantly lower than the  
2 percentage of such sales of other agricultural products; the  
3 one-size-fits-all approach of current federal law is hampering the  
4 ability of small farmers and ranchers to sell directly to customers  
5 and retailers, but by revising regulations to better reflect the  
6 sharply different needs of corporate agriculture and small-scale  
7 farming and ranching, the federal government can facilitate growth  
8 in a sector of the agricultural economy that is primed for  
9 expansion; now, therefore, be it

10         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
11 Legislature hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to  
12 amend existing laws and regulations governing animal slaughter and  
13 meat processing to remove procedural requirements that are unsuited  
14 to small and midsize slaughterhouse facilities, including basing  
15 scientific substantiation and microbial testing on individual  
16 product lines; to develop scale-appropriate approaches to the  
17 regulation of small and midsize slaughterhouses that take into  
18 consideration both the total volume and diversity of operations; to  
19 provide for appropriate regulation of mobile slaughter and  
20 processing units, including flexibility of the slaughter location  
21 and scale-appropriate provisions for the disposal of offal and  
22 wastewater; to allow feral hogs to be donated for food when  
23 field-killed and custom-processed; and to expand the current  
24 exemption for on-farm processing of poultry to allow for on-farm  
25 processing of other animals at a similar scale; and, be it further

26         RESOLVED, That the chief clerk forward official copies of  
27 this resolution to the president of the United States, to the

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1 president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of  
2 Representatives of the United States Congress, to the secretary of  
3 the United States Department of Agriculture, and to all the members  
4 of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this  
5 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a  
6 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.