

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 30, 2011

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 15

Introduced by Assembly Member Alejo
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Achadjian, Atkins, Campos, Garrick, Hueso, Lara, Olsen, Smyth, Valadao, Williams, and Yamada)
(Coauthor: Senator Vargas)

August 15, 2011

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 15—Relative to California cut flowers.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 15, as amended, Alejo. California cut flowers.

This measure would urge the United States government to consider the California jobs and economic stimulus provided by the California floriculture industry when advancing free trade agreements, specifically with Colombia.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, California produces some of the finest fresh cut
2 flowers in the world; and

3 WHEREAS, Over 75 percent of domestically grown flowers
4 are grown in California, accounting for almost 20 percent of all
5 flowers sold in the United States, directly supporting more than
6 10,000 jobs in the state, and having a \$10.3 billion economic
7 impact on the economy; and

8 WHEREAS, The number of our state's flower farms is shrinking
9 rapidly due to federal trade policies beyond their control,
10 specifically with countries like Colombia that have benefitted from

1 the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA) and Colombian and
2 United States government subsidies for the past two decades; and
3 WHEREAS, ATPA countries, primarily Colombia, supplied 82
4 percent of the total value of United States imports of fresh cut
5 flowers in 2009; and

6 WHEREAS, The Colombian government gave roughly \$210
7 million in subsidies and support to their cut flower industry from
8 2005 to 2009, inclusive, and the United States Agency for
9 International Development (USAID) has given Colombia millions
10 of dollars to assist in the development of its flower industry; and

11 WHEREAS, Colombian exports to the United States increased
12 89 percent between 2002 and 2010 and has resulted in a steep and
13 rapid decline in the number of domestic flower-growers *farmers*;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, The number of acres dedicated to cut flower
16 production in the United States declined by 22 percent from 2002
17 to 2010, inclusive; and

18 WHEREAS, The 2010 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
19 and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations
20 Conference Report included language urging the United States
21 Secretary of Agriculture to “use all available resources to support
22 domestic flower-growers *farmers* in their efforts to develop an
23 efficient and environmentally friendly transportation, storage, and
24 distribution system to better compete with foreign producers”; and

25 WHEREAS, California—growers *farmers* are working
26 aggressively to overcome trade challenges through innovation,
27 diversification, and sheer determination; and

28 WHEREAS, Working with the California Cut Flower
29 Commission (CCFC), the state agricultural commission that
30 advocates on behalf of California flower farmers, California
31 floriculture has worked to remain competitive by offering higher
32 end products produced in an increasingly environmentally
33 sustainable manner; and

34 WHEREAS, California flower farmers use the latest in
35 horticultural science to increase yields and develop new varieties
36 for the market, while also meeting California labor and
37 environmental standards that are much higher than their foreign
38 competitors; and

39 WHEREAS, California flower farmers are also in the final phase
40 of developing a new transportation, logistics, and shipping system

1 and center that would reduce California floriculture shipping costs
2 by 30 percent to 40 percent; and

3 WHEREAS, Floriculture is an important California industry
4 that must be considered as the United States works to advance the
5 pending United States - Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement;
6 ~~now, therefore, be it and~~

7 *WHEREAS, This resolution does not nullify any preexisting*
8 *position taken by the Legislature regarding free trade agreements;*
9 *now, therefore, be it*

10 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
11 *California, jointly, That the Legislature urges the United States*
12 *government to consider the California jobs and economic stimulus*
13 *provided by the California floriculture industry when advancing*
14 *free trade agreements, specifically with Colombia; and be it further*

15 *Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies*
16 *of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United*
17 *States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the*
18 *Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative*
19 *from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the*
20 *author for appropriate distribution.*