

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 15

Introduced by Assembly Member Alejo

August 15, 2011

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 15, as introduced, 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
11 the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA) and Colombian and
12 United States government subsidies for the past two decades; and

1 WHEREAS, ATPA countries, primarily Colombia, supplied 82
2 percent of the total value of United States imports of fresh cut
3 flowers in 2009; and

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

9 WHEREAS, Colombian exports to the United States increased
10 89 percent between 2002 and 2010 and has resulted in a steep and
11 rapid decline in the number of domestic flower growers; and

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

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

22 WHEREAS, California growers are working aggressively to
23 overcome trade challenges through innovation, diversification,
24 and sheer determination; and

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

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

36 WHEREAS, California flower farmers are also in the final phase
37 of developing a new transportation, logistics, and shipping system
38 and center that would reduce California floriculture shipping costs
39 by 30 percent to 40 percent; and

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

5 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
6 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature urges the United States
7 government to consider the California jobs and economic stimulus
8 provided by the California floriculture industry when advancing
9 free trade agreements, specifically with Colombia; and be it further

10 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
11 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
12 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
13 Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative
14 from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the
15 author for appropriate distribution.