AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 31, 2011

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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~~ *Yamada, Allen, Ammiano, Beall, Bill Berryhill, Block, Blumenfield, Bonilla, Bradford, Brownley, Buchanan, Butler, Charles Calderon, Carter, Cedillo, Chesbro, Cook, Davis, Dickinson, Eng, Feuer, Fong, Fuentes, Furutani, Beth Gaines, Galgiani, Gatto, Gordon, Hall, Hayashi, Roger Hernández, Hill, Huber, Huffman, Bonnie Lowenthal, Ma, Mendoza, Miller, Monning, Morrell, Nielsen, Pan, Perea, John A. Pérez, V. Manuel Pérez, Portantino, Silva, Skinner, Solorio, Swanson, Torres, Wagner, and Wieckowski*)

(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.

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

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

WHEREAS, The number of our state's flower farms is shrinking rapidly due to federal trade policies beyond their control, specifically with countries like Colombia that have benefitted from the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA) and Colombian and United States government subsidies for the past two decades; and

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, California farmers are working aggressively to overcome trade challenges through innovation, diversification, and sheer determination; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Floriculture is an important California industry that must be considered as the United States works to advance the pending United States - Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement; and

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

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature urges 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; and be it further

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

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