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Attn: Representative Donovan, Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee, and Committee Members

Testimony in Opposition to HR 8280

A Joint Resolution Creating a Special Joint Legislative Commission to Study, Provide Recommendations, and Oversee Implementation of Requirements for State Departments and Vendors to Adopt Good Food Purchasing Standards in the State of Rhode Island
Before the House Health and Human Services Committee

May 21, 2024

Rhode Island Farm Bureau Federation is an independent, non-governmental grassroots organization made up of farmers and others with agricultural interests. Today our over 1,100 RIFB members are not only large farmers and small farmers, but also include those engaged in agricultural industries, teachers of agriculture, and consumers.

We are the largest agricultural organization in Rhode Island, yet this resolution, to leverage the State of Rhode Island's purchasing and procurement of food, does not include the Rhode Island Farm Bureau in the list of 17 Commission members. Only one of the groups included represents actual farmers, Southside Community Land Trust, which represents primarily urban and some small farms. The most recent USDA census lists 1,050 farms in RI, and this commission would only represent a small percentage of farms. If this commission is going to be making decisions on what foods will be purchased in our state, to feed people in our state, the farms growing your local food need actual representation on the commission.

The Rhode Island Farm Bureau cannot support House Resolution 8280 in its current form.

Henry B. Wright III
President, RI Farm Bureau