**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR DONNA HENNESSEE BRYAN FOR HER INNOVATIVE WORK IN PROVIDING VITAL MARKETS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA FARMERS THROUGH THE SEEDS OF HOPE FARMERS’ MARKET PROJECT.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are pleased to learn that the Seeds of Hope Farmers’ Market Project is celebrating its twenty‑fifth season under the dedicated leadership of Donna Hennessee Bryan; and

Whereas, born in Sylva, North Carolina, Donna Bryan earned a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of North Carolina in 1965; and

Whereas, after she moved to Columbia in the early 1980s, she became concerned about the plight of the rural poor, farmers, and migrant workers on Johns Island; and

Whereas, she soon began her long service as a member of the board of Rural Mission, Inc., and later a term on the board of East Coast Head Start Project, which provides continuity of services to children of migrant workers on the Eastern seaboard; and

Whereas, after she was appointed the chairperson of the Mission Work Area of Washington Street United Methodist Church, the group was required to choose a six‑week study in 1986, and the members chose to study “Hunger”; and

Whereas, in the fall of 1986 after a severe drought in the Southeast, the South Carolina Methodist Conference brought together some fifty farmers from Johns Island and Wadmalaw Island to give them small relief checks, and Donna Bryan was surprised to learn that the farmers’ chief concern was the lack of reliable markets, not the drought; and

Whereas, with the support of the Mission Work Area and the encouragement of her minister, in the summer of 1987, she persuaded a group of farmers from the state’s sea islands to make the two hundred eighty‑six‑mile round trip once a week to sell their produce at Washington Street United Methodist Church; and

Whereas, the clearly successful Seeds of Hope Farmers’ Market had provided the farmers with a reliable market and the church with a highly visible mission, and in 1988, six more churches started markets; and

Whereas, in 1989, when the South Carolina Christian Action Council assumed the sponsorship for the Seeds of Hope Farmers’ Market Project, Donna left her full-time job to set up a small office in downtown Columbia to advertise the project to the council’s member churches; and

Whereas, in 1992, Seeds of Hope piloted the South Carolina WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program which introduced fresh fruits and vegetables into the diets of lower‑income pregnant women and their young children and which helped small community markets become more sustainable by expanding the awareness and use of these markets within low‑income communities; and

Whereas, among its many honors, the project received the 1992 Ecumenical Recognition Award from the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., was featured in *Good Housekeeping* magazine in 1993, and was honored as Project of the Year by the Presbyterian Hunger Program; and

Whereas, Seeds of Hope later formed a coalition with the South Carolina Department of Agriculture and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control’s WIC Program, which has benefitted thousands of women, children, and senior citizens; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are grateful for the work of Donna Bryan through the Seeds of Hope which has established farmers’ markets in fifty‑nine locations in seventeen cities and towns since 1987 and sponsored markets for seventy‑six farmers from fourteen counties, largely benefitting farmers from Charleston, Williamsburg, and Sumter counties. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor Donna Hennessee Bryan for her innovative work in providing vital markets for South Carolina farmers through the Seeds of Hope Farmers’ Market Project.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Donna Hennessee Bryan.

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