

Legislation Text

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Calling upon the United States Congress to amend existing “food-to-fuel” mandates and immediately embark on a series of policy remedies aimed at the production of advanced biofuels.

WHEREAS, The Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the price of basic foods in the United States is currently rising at twice the rate of inflation and is expected to continue to escalate in the future; and

WHEREAS, This rapid escalation in food costs has created an enormous strain on low-income families and people living on fixed incomes in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania and around the nation, particularly at this time of economic uncertainty; and

WHEREAS, The inflation in food prices has also strained the ability of local government agencies to meet the food needs of residents, especially those residents who rely on federal food stamps; and

WHEREAS, The World Bank, United Nations (“UN”), and other international institutions reported that, globally, the prices of food staples have risen at increasing rates, creating what has been called a “silent tsunami” that is pushing hundreds of millions of impoverished people to the brink of starvation and creating untold human suffering and political instability; and

WHEREAS, Several UN agencies, relief groups, and the International Monetary Fund have established that as much as thirty percent of the increase in food prices is related to policies that mandate the conversion of food crops, including corn and soy, for the production of ethanol; and

WHEREAS, These “food-to-fuel” mandates are one of the only factors driving higher food costs that are directly under the control of the United States government; and **WHEREAS**, The Department of Agriculture estimated that, in this year alone, approximately one-third of all corn grown in the United States will be diverted to produce ethanol; and

WHEREAS, It has been reported in peer reviewed studies conducted by leading climate scientists, that

not only are “food-to-fuel” mandates driving up costs of food staples, but they are also causing severe environmental damage; and

WHEREAS, Such damage to the environment is caused by the clearing of forests, wetlands and grasslands for expanded agricultural production, thus, adding to the release of global carbon emissions and exacerbating the global climate change crisis; and

WHEREAS, It has been established that the most promising path to energy independence and environmental protection lies in the promotion of truly renewable fuel sources such as advanced cellulosic biofuels that rely on non-food feedstocks, including agriculture waste, woodchips, and switchgrass; and

WHEREAS, Congress should create new policies that phase out the use of food crops for biofuel production, promote increased investment in advanced biofuels, and provide immediate food relief for vulnerable populations in the United States and poor nations around the world; and

WHEREAS, Governor Rendell should also invoke his right to petition the Environmental Protection Agency for a waiver from federal ethanol mandates, as provided in the Energy Policy Act of 2005; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby call on the United States Congress to amend existing “food-to-fuel” mandates and immediately embark on a series of policy remedies aimed at the production of advanced biofuels.