



Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Commerce & Economic Development to hold hearings regarding the development of co-ops in the City of Philadelphia and initiatives to support their growth.

WHEREAS, Cooperatives, or “co-ops,” are enterprises that are owned and controlled by the people who use its services or buy its goods, which range in size from the local corner store to national Fortune 500 companies and including grocery stores, utilities, or financial institutions; and

WHEREAS, Co-ops are unique because ownership is rooted in the community and profits are equitably distributed, re-circulating money to local stakeholders, providing a stable source of jobs across generations of local owners, increasing tax revenue, and reducing dependence on social programs; and

WHEREAS, Additional benefits of co-ops include inducing more local spending, providing higher wages to the median worker, and being significantly more likely to stay in business for more than five years; and

WHEREAS, The greater Philadelphia area already hosts more than 100 food co-ops, housing co-ops, school co-ops, energy co-ops, credit unions (financial co-ops), and many others, which are being joined by start-up co-ops and conventional businesses converting to cooperatives; and

WHEREAS, Co-ops often deal with issues being addressed by City government, such as the provision of Keystone Stars childcare, bringing healthy food to low income neighborhoods, building wealth for an immigrant communities, and facilitating job training for returning citizens; and

WHEREAS, Profitable businesses close regularly when retiring owners could instead convert to a co-op by selling to their employees through a worker cooperative or an employee stock ownership plan; and

WHEREAS, Cities including New York City and Rochester, New York, and Madison, Wisconsin are investing small, yet critical strategic appropriations in technical and financial assistance to their local co-ops and otherwise assisting them with intentional policy efforts, such as targeting conversions; and

WHEREAS, Various policy tools are available to the City to support new and existing co-ops, like research, technical assistance, contractor preferences, and the establishment of relationships with anchor institutions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Commerce & Economic Development hold hearings regarding the development of co-ops in the City of Philadelphia and initiatives to support their growth.