

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION No. _____ C.M.S.

DRAFT

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER BRUNNER

A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH ORGANIC PRODUCERS & CONSUMERS IN DEVELOPING STANDARDS FOR THE NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM, WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ADMINISTERS TO DEVELOP NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE MARKETING OF ORGANICALLY PRODUCED PRODUCTS AND ENSURE CONSISTENT STANDARDS FOR SUCH PRODUCTS.

WHEREAS the United States Department of Agriculture administers the National Organic Program, the mission of which is to develop and implement national standards that govern the marketing of agricultural products as organically produced, to facilitate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced, and ensure consumers that such products meet consistent standards; and

WHEREAS, organic foods are the fastest growing segment of the American food economy, at 20% growth annually, and organic goods are sold in 73% of mainstream American supermarkets; and

WHEREAS on April 24, 2004, the National Organic Program issued its Pesticide Use Directive, which allowed farmers to use pesticides that violate organic standards, as long as they were unaware that such pesticides include prohibited ingredients; and

WHEREAS on April 16, 2004, the National Organic Program issued an Antibiotic Guidance statement which allowed dairy animals to be treated with any drug and still remain on an organic farm; and

WHEREAS on April 16, 2004, the National Organic Program issued the Fishmeal Use Guidance, which allowed the use of non-organic fishmeal in organic livestock production, violating the Program's own 100% organic feed requirement for animals; and

WHEREAS on April 14, 2004, the National Organic Program issued an administrative directive that they will no longer monitor or police organic labels on non-agricultural products; and

WHEREAS on April 16, 2004, the National Organic Program permitted the use of the label "organic" on fish before the national standards for organic aquaculture had even been developed; and

WHEREAS, each the above administrative directives were done without the benefit of public review, without consultation with producers and consumers, and without any public process whatsoever; and

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WHEREAS, on May 26, 2004, due to significant public outcry and protest, Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman rescinded the above administrative directives; and

WHEREAS the above administrative directives severely undermined the accuracy and credibility of the National Organic Program, and, despite the Secretary's reversal, public confidence in the administration of the National Organic Program has been significantly compromised; and

WHEREAS Oakland and the East Bay are national centers for the production, consumption and use of organically produced foods and goods, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Oakland believes that loosening organic standards has serious negative economic and public health impacts, undermines the integrity of the organic label, hampers the development and expansion of the market for organic goods, and seriously misleads consumers, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Oakland commends the Department of Agriculture for rescinding the administrative directives, yet states that any future discussion regarding changes to the standards of the National Organic Program must involve thorough public input and debate, including consultation with organizations that represent organic producers and consumers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Oakland directs the City Clerk to send copies of this resolution to Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Dianne Feinstein, so they may know the feeling of this Council.

In Council, Oakland, California, June 15, 2004

Passed By The Following Vote:

Ayes- Brooks, Brunner, Chang, Nadel, Quan, Reid, Wan and
President De La Fuente

Noes-

Absent-

Abstention-

Attest:

Ceda Floyd
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council
of the City of Oakland, California

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