SLS 15RS-400 **ORIGINAL**

2015 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 68

BY SENATOR MORRISH

AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES. Memorializes Congress to restore trade relations between the United States and Cuba in order to open the market to Louisiana rice.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To memorialize the Congress of the United States to restore trade relations between the United States and Cuba in order to open the market to Louisiana rice.

WHEREAS, in 2014, Louisiana produced over three billion pounds of rice amounting to fifteen percent of the United States' rice production; and

WHEREAS, the rice industry provides over nine thousand jobs to the Louisiana economy; and

WHEREAS, increased rice exports to Cuba would lead to greater export opportunities for Louisiana farmers and the potential for increased acreage; and

WHEREAS, resumed rice exports to Cuba would also benefit those affiliated with rice production, milling, and exporting; and

WHEREAS, rice farming and milling has a large impact on Louisiana's secondary economy in that for every dollar that Louisiana rice produces, approximately thirty-five cents is added indirectly to the economy through seed and fertilizer sales, farm equipment, crop services, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, resuming the trade of rice with Cuba would be a huge economic gain for Louisiana's port system; and

WHEREAS, prior to the creation of the trade embargo in 1962, the Port of New

Orleans handled over sixty-five percent of all traded goods to Cuba; and

WHEREAS, the fifty-plus-year trade embargo between the United States and Cuba remains the longest-standing embargo in modern history; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana is the top state of origination for Cuban-bound exports, representing nearly thirty percent of the export market share; and

WHEREAS, it is time to end an outdated policy that continues to deny valuable business opportunities to Louisiana rice farmers, millers, and allied businesses, such as transportation, storage, and shipping; and

WHEREAS, Cuba imports more than one billion dollars worth of food every year, including approximately five hundred thousand tons of rice; and

WHEREAS, the rice industry in Louisiana is positioned to benefit from the market opportunities that normalized trade with Cuba would provide due to our healthy supply, port infrastructure, and proximity to Cuba; and

WHEREAS, the USA Rice Federation and its affiliate members along with the Louisiana Rice Growers Association, the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board, and the Louisiana Rice Council are in support of restoring trade relations between the United States and Cuba in order to open the market to Louisiana rice.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana memorializes the Congress of the United States to restore trade relations between the United States and Cuba in order to open the market to Louisiana rice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate, the clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Curry Lann.

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DIGEST

SCR 68 Original 2015 Regular Session Morrish

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