

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 349

Encouraging the consumption of Fair Trade Certified coffee.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 25, 2003

Mr. STARK (for himself, Ms. LEE, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. FARR, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. SABO, Mr. FILNER, and Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Encouraging the consumption of Fair Trade Certified coffee.

Whereas in the context of the global economy, consumer choices and institutional purchases affect communities and the environment throughout the world;

Whereas since 1997 the price of coffee has declined nearly 70 percent on the world market and has recently reached its lowest level in a century;

Whereas the collapse of coffee prices has resulted in a widespread humanitarian crisis for 25 million coffee growers in more than 50 developing countries where coffee is a

critical source of rural employment and foreign exchange earnings;

Whereas coffee accounts for approximately 80 percent of export revenues for Burundi, 54 percent of export revenues for Ethiopia, 34 percent of export revenues for Uganda, 31 percent of export revenues for Rwanda, 30 percent of export revenues for Nicaragua, 26 percent of export revenues for El Salvador, and 25 percent of export revenues for Honduras;

Whereas according to the International Coffee Organization, coffee producing countries are now only earning \$5.5 billion in revenue from a \$70 billion global coffee industry, while in 1989, coffee producing countries earned \$12 billion in revenue from a \$30 billion global coffee industry;

Whereas the International Coffee Organization reports that in Guatemala, the coffee harvest labor force has been cut in half to 250,000, while in Columbia the coffee harvest labor force has decreased by 200,000 jobs;

Whereas the World Bank reports that 600,000 permanent and temporary coffee workers in Central America have been left unemployed in the last two years;

Whereas the World Food Program estimates that low international coffee prices have created 150,000 refugees, hundreds of whom have died while thousands have illegally immigrated to the United States in search of work;

Whereas small-scale coffee farmers who receive local market prices for their harvests cannot meet their costs of production and are therefore forced into a cycle of poverty, unemployment, debt, and migration;

Whereas The Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal report that coffee farmers are

switching to cultivating illegal crops, such as coca and opium poppy, because these crops are more profitable in light of low international coffee prices in traditional coffee-growing countries;

Whereas the Office of National Drug Control Policy reports that illegal drug usage has cost the United States over \$160 billion dollars;

Whereas Fair Trade Certification is a solution that ensures a minimum price per pound of coffee of \$1.26 for producers and grants them access to credit;

Whereas Fair Trade Certification requires the implementation of sustainable environmental management plans and encourages the cultivation of organic and shade grown coffee, which eliminates the use of harmful chemicals and preserves the critical biodiversity and habitat for migratory birds and other animals;

Whereas coffee is a cash crop and the income earned through the sale of Fair Trade Certified coffee enables coffee farmers and their cooperatives to invest in community development programs, such as health care and education, and in environmentally sound technologies that save water, protect soils, and conserve biodiversity;

Whereas Fair Trade Certification enables small-scale farmers to support their families and invest in their farms and communities, thereby maintaining economic and social stability in rural areas and increasing overall foreign exchange earnings for their countries;

Whereas Fair Trade Certified coffee markets provide a critical economic alternative for more than 675,000 coffee farmers and their families in 23 countries around the world who are able to bypass exploitative middlemen and

sell their coffee directly to markets in North America and Europe;

Whereas the Fair Trade Certified coffee market is growing at a rapid rate of more than 50 percent a year, and more than 160 companies, including Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, Seattle's Best, Green Mountain, and Sara Lee, now offer Fair Trade Certified coffee;

Whereas Fair Trade Certified coffee is now served in dining halls, cafes, and at catered events on more than 200 college campuses nationwide, including Harvard University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of California at Santa Cruz, the University of Michigan, Duke University, Oklahoma State University, Georgetown University, and the University of Iowa;

Whereas there is an independent market for Fair Trade Certified coffee, but the overall supply of Fair Trade Certified coffee far exceeds current market demand by at least 130 million pounds;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development supports several Fair Trade farmer cooperatives in developing countries;

Whereas Fair Trade Certified coffee is already served in several locations in the House of Representatives and the Senate, in all dining and café venues in the World Bank, and in many European government agencies, including the European Parliament, the British House of Commons, the British Departments of Trade and Industry and International Development, and in the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices;

Whereas Fair Trade Certified coffee is of a comparable price and taste to other high-quality coffees and has been rec-

ognized as such by independent, internationally respected coffee tasting experts; and

Whereas support for Fair Trade Certified coffee furthers United States foreign policy goals by stemming the wave of illegal immigrants from coffee-growing regions, providing critical economic alternatives to the planting of illegal crops, and helping to promote economic and social stability and community development in rural areas: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 representatives that—

3 (1) the legislative and executive branches of the
4 Federal government have a responsibility to set a
5 high standard of ethics with regard to their eco-
6 nomic activities, and should therefore ensure that
7 the goods and services they purchase and use are
8 produced in the fairest manner possible;

9 (2) Fair Trade Certified coffee should be made
10 available at all events and food service locations in
11 the legislative and executive branches of the Federal
12 government, including through indirect purchases by
13 food service providers; and

14 (3) information should be made available to the
15 public and to State and local governments about the
16 importance of Fair Trade Certified coffee.

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