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State of Minnesota

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-FIFTH SESSION

HOUSE FILE No. 828

February 12, 2007

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Commerce and Labor

February 22, 2007

Committee Recommendation and Adoption of Report:

To Pass

Read Second Time

1.1 A resolution
1.2 urging the President and Congress to end trade, financial, and travel restrictions
1.3 to Cuba.

1.4 WHEREAS, the relationship between the United States and Cuba has been marked by
1.5 tension and confrontation; and

1.6 WHEREAS, furthering this hostility is the 40-year-old United States trade embargo against
1.7 the island nation, the longest standing such embargo in modern history; and

1.8 WHEREAS, the United States Congress approved the 2000 Trade Sanctions Reform and
1.9 Export Enhancement Act, which provides for the limited sale of food, medicine, medical supplies,
1.10 and agricultural products from the United States to Cuba; and

1.11 WHEREAS, recent additional restrictions on specified payment procedures will
1.12 substantially curtail existing levels of limited trade; and

1.13 WHEREAS, Cuba has imported over \$1 billion of food products and agricultural
1.14 commodities from the United States during the past five years to support and feed its 11 million
1.15 people; and

1.16 WHEREAS, import volume is expected to grow significantly in coming years as Cuba
1.17 continues its economic recovery, following the withdrawal of subsidies from the former Soviet
1.18 Union in the last decade; and

1.19 WHEREAS, Minnesota is ideally positioned to benefit from the market opportunities
1.20 that free trade with Cuba would provide, as trade restrictions succeed only in driving sales to
1.21 competitors in other countries that have no such restrictions; and

2.1 WHEREAS, agricultural production in Minnesota is valued at more than \$9 billion
2.2 annually; and

2.3 WHEREAS, Minnesota is a leader in the overall value of agricultural exports at more than
2.4 \$2.5 billion annually; and

2.5 WHEREAS, under an ideal trade scenario, Minnesota farmers could enjoy at least \$45
2.6 million in new exports annually; the state's total economic benefit would be nearly \$92 million,
2.7 including 900 new jobs; and

2.8 WHEREAS, in recent years, Cuba has developed important pharmaceutical products,
2.9 specifically a new meningitis B vaccine that has virtually eliminated the disease in Cuba; such
2.10 products have the potential to protect Americans against diseases that continue to threaten large
2.11 populations around the world; and

2.12 WHEREAS, Cuba's potential oil production and reserves have attracted the interest of
2.13 numerous other countries who have been helping Cuba develop its existing wells and search for
2.14 new reserves; Cuba's oil output has increased well over 400 percent over the last decade; and

2.15 WHEREAS, the United States' trade, financial, and travel restrictions against Cuba hinder
2.16 Minnesota's export of agricultural and food products, its ability to import essential energy
2.17 products, its ability to treat Minnesotans' illnesses, and the right of Minnesotans to travel freely;
2.18 NOW, THEREFORE,

2.19 BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that it supports national
2.20 efforts to remove all trade, financial, and travel restrictions to Cuba and urges the President and
2.21 Congress to take all necessary steps to see that this end is accomplished.

2.22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State of the State of Minnesota is
2.23 directed to prepare copies of this memorial and transmit them to the President of the United
2.24 States, the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and the Clerk of
2.25 the United States House of Representatives, the chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture,
2.26 Nutrition, and Forestry, the chair of the House Committee on Agriculture, and Minnesota's
2.27 Senators and Representatives in Congress.