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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Illinois-based businesses play a critical role in driving economic growth, innovation, and community vitality within the State; and

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WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc., headquartered in Morton Grove, has established itself as a leading producer of probiotic and cultured dairy products, exemplifying excellence in business operations and community engagement; and

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WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc. was founded in 1986 by Michael Smolyansky, who immigrated to the United States from the former Soviet Union with the vision of introducing the health benefits of kefir to the American market; and

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WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc., under the leadership of Julie Smolyansky, has continued to expand and excel, achieving significant milestones as a publicly traded company and as an industry leader in innovative, health-focused food and beverage solutions; and

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WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc. has consistently prioritized excellence, sustainability, and corporate responsibility by delivering high-quality products; and

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1 WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc. has significantly expanded
2 its global footprint, exporting its products to numerous
3 countries, including Mexico, the Caribbean, South Africa and,
4 as a co-packer, Ireland for further distribution in France,
5 thus showcasing Illinois as a leader in health-focused food
6 manufacturing on the international stage; and

7 WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc. entered into a groundbreaking
8 distribution agreement in the United Arab Emirates in November
9 of 2024, bringing its kefir and farmer cheese products to
10 supermarkets and hypermarkets in Dubai and across the
11 Emirates, further cementing its global presence; and

12 WHEREAS, Exports are vital to the Illinois economy,
13 driving job creation, enhancing global trade relationships,
14 and reinforcing the State's position as an economic leader;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc. has demonstrated exceptional
17 financial success, achieving record annual net sales of \$160.1
18 million in 2023, representing a 13.1% year-over-year increase,
19 and reporting a net income of \$11.4 million, a substantial
20 rise from \$0.9 million in 2022; and

21 WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc. employs approximately 288
22 individuals, with a significant portion of its workforce based

1 in Illinois, thereby strengthening the local economy and
2 providing valuable employment opportunities for residents; and

3 WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc. has received widespread
4 recognition for its contributions to health and wellness, with
5 its products becoming a staple in households across Illinois
6 and beyond; and

7 WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc., along with other innovative
8 food manufacturers, are essential to the economy of Illinois,
9 driving advancements in the food and beverage sector,
10 fostering sustainability, and contributing to the State's
11 global competitiveness; and

12 WHEREAS, Lifeway Foods, Inc. has recently been the target
13 of an unsolicited acquisition proposal from Danone North
14 America PBC, which seeks to acquire the remaining shares of
15 Lifeway that it does not already own; and

16 WHEREAS, Such an acquisition could result in significant
17 operational changes, including potential relocation or
18 restructuring, which might negatively impact the State's
19 workforce and corporate leadership currently provided by
20 Lifeway Foods, Inc.; and

21 WHEREAS, Maintaining Lifeway Food's independence and

1 Illinois-based operations is crucial for preserving the jobs,
2 innovation, and economic benefits the company delivers to the
3 State; and

4 WHEREAS, Supporting local businesses and preventing the
5 loss of corporate headquarters to out-of-state entities, which
6 usually diminish economic activity and employment
7 opportunities within Illinois, is vital; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
9 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
10 we commend Lifeway Foods, Inc. for its outstanding
11 achievements and invaluable contributions to the State of
12 Illinois, and we celebrate its dedication to excellence,
13 innovation, and community enrichment; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That we express our concerns regarding the
15 potential acquisition of Lifeway Foods, Inc. by Danone North
16 America PBC and urge all stakeholders to carefully consider
17 the potential adverse effects on the Illinois economy and
18 workforce; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our commitment to supporting
20 Illinois-based businesses like Lifeway Foods, Inc., especially
21 those founded by immigrants drawn to the freedom of our shores
22 and nurtured in Illinois' economic climate, whose continued

1 success and presence are essential to the State's economic
2 health and prosperity; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
4 presented to Lifeway Foods, Inc. as a testament to our
5 admiration and our best wishes for its continued success as an
6 independent, Illinois-owned company for many years in the
7 future.