

We Support the Keystone Fresh Act!

Dear PA legislators,

We, the over 70 organizations, associations and businesses named here, are writing in support of [House Bill 2420 \(Rep Burgos, Fritz\)](#), The Keystone Fresh Act. This legislation would provide Pennsylvania family farmers with more stable economic prospects and ensure that schools have access to fresh, locally sourced foods. Implementing and funding this legislation will make a positive and meaningful impact in the lives of Pennsylvania's children, farmers and communities.

Schools across Pennsylvania serve more than [157 million lunches per year](#), providing critical nutrients to children across the Commonwealth, and making them one of the largest potential markets for agricultural producers from across the state. Despite having a child nutrition budget of more than \$729 million per year, [schools self-report that they spend less than 2%](#) of those funds on PA grown foods. [Local food purchasing incentive \(LFPI\) legislation](#), like the Keystone Fresh Act, would address this problem by establishing a grant program incentivizing schools to purchase, promote and serve local foods in their meal programs.

[Similar LFPI programs](#) in 16 other states have been an effective and innovative strategy, increasing the quantity of local foods served in school meals and creating an essential market for farmers. [Research has shown](#) LFPI programs generate a local multiplier effect of \$1.4 for every dollar spent – keeping local dollars circulating in local economies.

Changing procurement practices takes technical assistance and resources, which is why the Keystone Fresh Act would also provide funding for farmers to purchase equipment or marketing materials that meet school food market needs. Additionally, it would allocate funding for technical assistance providers to offer training for schools, farmers, and distributors making this food systems shift.

This initiative is a win-win-win scenario, fostering economic growth, improving public health outcomes, and nurturing stronger communities, all while nourishing Pennsylvania's children with the nutrition they require to thrive. We are proud to offer our support of House Bill 2420 and call on the state Assembly to pass this initiative before the end of the 2023-2024 legislative session.

Thank you in advance for supporting this important proposal, and helping improve the lives of Pennsylvania's children, farmers and communities.

The PA Farm to School Network
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Pasa Sustainable Agriculture
The School Nutrition Association of PA
PA Cattlemen's Association
Feeding Pennsylvania
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania
The Pennsylvania State Grange
Conservation Voters of PA
Partnership for Better Health
The Food Trust
Philabundance
Pittsburgh Food Policy Council
Just Harvest
The Food Dignity Movement
Chef Ann Foundation
Happy Valley Meat Company
Jefferson Einstein Health
Greener Partners
Allies for Children
York County Food Bank
Adams County Food Policy Council
Westmoreland Food Bank
Wayne County Community Foundation
The Common Market
The GIANT Company
Three Rivers Grown
Moin Halal Meat LLC
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Wayne Communities Food Alliance
Clarion River Organics
Plant it Forward
Hilltop Urban Farm
Central PA Food Bank
Nutritional Development Services, Archdiocese of Philadelphia
School District of Philadelphia
Armstrong School District
Seneca Valley School District
Octorara Area School District
UpstreamPgh
Cousins Fresh Market
We The People - Pennsylvania
Buttonwood Farms/Delta School
Spring Grove Area School District
Potter's Farm
Stacey Woodson, LLC
Grow Pittsburgh
Kiddie City Early Learning Center, Inc.
Bellwood-Antis Public Library
Quaker Valley School District
Cheder Menachem Inc
Steelton-Highspire School District
Mount Washington Children's Center
Cocalico School District
Upper Moreland Township School District
Big Spring School District Food Service
Fairview School District
Colonial School District
Central Counties Youth Detention Center
Franco Harris Pittsburgh Center at Penn State
Reinford Farms Inc
Edinboro Market, Inc.
Highlands School District
Northern Lehigh School District
Browns Family Childcare, LLC
Thompson Farms Volant, LLC
Davis Grown
Green Trees Early Learning Center, inc.
Gettysburg Area School District
Pittsburgh Regional Food Service Directors
Forest Hills School District
Kidz Kingdom Early Learning Center
Baytree Farm
Lifespan school & daycare

Supported by a variety of groups across sectors, including...



“Programs like this allow school food service programs to prioritize locally grown products in their school meals. They bring awareness to our students about where food comes from and supports our local growers. This is a win for everyone.”

–Nicole Melia, Public Policy and Legislative Chair at School Nutrition Association of Pennsylvania (SNAPA)

“This is a great opportunity for our students to get fresh wholesome food that is produced by Pennsylvania farmers. It creates a connection between the students and the farmers who produce their food locally.”

–Chris Hoffman, President of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

“As a director and dietitian, I can't express enough how important it is that buying local products is supported by Pennsylvania. It's a direct support of PA agriculture, teaches our students what is directly available to them in their bountiful state, and offers our students fresh, delicious foods at breakfast and lunch!”

–Melissa Freestone, Nutrition Services Manager at Spring Grove Area School District, York County

“Local food systems and relationships help to strengthen ties between producers and consumers (farmers and kids) and between rural and urban areas. Local food production, short supply chains and a greater degree of self-sufficiency in PA is key.”

–Lindsay Jacob, Manager at Clarion River Organics, Clarion County

“I have worked with the Erie, PA Farm to School team since 2018 to include more local products in the District's meals. Their food service provider, Metz Culinary, has said multiple times that a program like the Keystone Fresh Act is the ONLY way they can afford to incorporate local produce, meats, etc.”

–Marti Martz, Executive Director of Edinboro Market, Inc., Erie County



Learn more:

pafarmtoschool.org/keystone-fresh-act

The Pennsylvania Farm to School Network is coordinated by The Food Trust and includes a Leadership Team of people representing a variety of state agencies, organizations and associations working with people actively engaged in farm to school activities in PA.