

Comment Report

HSB 95

A bill for an act relating to the powers and duties of the department of agriculture and land stewardship, including by providing for administration, programs, and regulations, providing fees, providing penalties, and making penalties applicable.(See HF 482, HF 827.)

Subcommittee Members: Baxter-CH, McClintock

Date: 01/28/2021

Time: 01:00 PM

Location: House Lounge

Name: Julia McGuire

Comment: As a mom, as someone who grew up in local small business, as a shopper, and as VicePresident of the Iowa Farmers Union, I want to encourage the subcommittee to create a fund and program for local foods as written in HSB 95. The coronavirus pandemic magnifies preexisting problems in the food system and funding a local foods program is a step in the right direction to minimize those problems. I've sat in meetings with food hub staff, early child care providers, and local table food producers as part of our organization's work with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and have heard how very helpful a reliable nutritious local food source was for Iowa communities this summer as part of the LPPP (from CARES Act funding).

Name: Renata Sack

Comment: The produce should not only be fresh and locally grown, but it should be mostly toxin free. The Environmental Working Group has a list telling us the most sprayed vegetables and fruit. All possible efforts should be made to grow veg and fruit without toxins and downright poisons.Especially for schools with physically developing children, this is of serious concern, asking for our caring and action.

Name: Aaron Lehman

Comment: The Iowa Farmers Union would like to thank the committee for bringing forward this legislation. We especially appreciate the effort to create the Local Farm Produce Program. We support the goals of creating connections between Iowa farmers and school districts and school children. It serves the dual role of creating more opportunities for local and regional food system farmers and providing nutritious local food for Iowa school children. Suggested improvements include adding language to include early care education centers among those eligible entities. Also we hope the bill language could either define local food or set up a process for the department and school districts to create a usable definition. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation and for the opportunity to share brief comments. We will look forward to future discussions.

Name: Jan Libbey

Comment: I have been involved with Iowa's local food and farm system for the past 25 years as a farmer, a local food coordinator, and an active member of North Iowa Fresh, LLC, one of the state's 8 food hubs.HSB 95 represents an excellent and exciting step for Iowa.It represents a more serious commitment to Iowa's local food and farming system and is a timely follow up to the successful and impactful Local Produce & Protein Program (LPPP) of 2020.Over the past 25 years, Iowans have made important investments in our local food and farm system. The response to the 2020 LPPP demonstrated how support for three key food system sectors farmers, distributors/food hub, and demand/schools could affect change. These sectors

demonstrated a readiness that Iowa should actively seek to expand. This is such an opportune time we need creative rural economic development and there's not many folks more creative than local food farmers look how they responded to sudden market changes in 2020 as a prime example. We need to invest in the health and wellness of Iowans whole, nutrient dense foods for farm to school and early care programs across the state represent a critical commitment that is so consistent with Iowa Healthiest State initiative. We need economic development that builds community our local food and farm system has achieved the success it has today because of very dedicated work of many farmers, customers, community partners, and organization leaders who have done the grounded, grit work of building relationships and shaping strategic plans. We are prime to leverage all of the capacity established to date in order to move us along toward our greater capacity. Passing HSB 95 establishes an important piece of the state infrastructure to help us achieve these goals. And finally, this originates from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Naig sees the opportunity. I participated in a webinar this past Monday on which Deputy Secretary Julie Kenney was a panelist. It was so exciting to see Iowa represented so strongly among Dept. of Ag colleagues and others from across the nation. As members of the Agriculture Subcommittee, your support of this bill can make a significant contribution to the work that has already been achieved. And I know you can count on continued dedication of supportive local food and farm partners across the state moving forward. Thank you for considering my comments. Jan Libbey, One Step at a Time Gardens, Kanawha, IA

Name: Luke Elzinga

Comment: The Des Moines Area Religious Council would like to express our support for the local farm produce fund and local farm produce program that are included in this bill. We believe this fund and program would be a positive step toward increasing access to nutritious, locally grown food in our schools as well as supporting Iowa growers. According to the United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings of 2020, the state of Iowa is ranked 33rd in the nation when it comes to fruit and vegetable consumption. We fully support the local farm produce program, and would like to see it expanded to include early childhood centers and antihunger nonprofit organizations like food banks and food pantries as well. We also believe the \$1,000 cap per school/school district is likely to quickly be met by participating schools, and appreciate that the legislation includes language to allow for additional funds to be distributed if there is money left over. We believe this bill has great potential to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, provide a learning opportunity for Iowa's school children about where their food comes from, and support local Iowa growers.

Name: Tom Chapman

Comment: The Iowa Catholic Conference is registered as undecided on HSB 95. We represent the Catholic schools in Iowa. Specifically, we support Part A of Division III of the bill, creating a local food produce program for schools. The purpose of the program is to assist schools in purchasing fresh produce from Iowa farmers. The state would provide one dollar in matching funds for every three dollars spent by the school. This is different than the current food to school program, which does not provide funding to schools to support local food purchases.

Name: Jean McMaken

Comment: Please support this bill. Getting fresh foods to Iowan students is important. I hope you will expand this bill. It's important to include early childhood education centers. And please provide funding! Our children deserve this. Thank you.