

Local Food = Healthy Students, Vibrant Farms

Support The Local Farm Products Bill

Section 6A of H4459, sponsored by Rep. Koutoujian and Sen. Moore

WHEN LOCAL FARMS SELL DIRECT TO SCHOOLS:

Students eat more fruits and vegetables.

Students try new foods and healthier options.

Local economies prosper and farmers can gain a significant and steady new market. MA farms currently selling direct to schools average \$700,000 in additional revenue annually.



BUT TODAY...

Lack of access to healthy foods contributes to rising rates of obesity and related chronic diseases among children.

Public contracting laws create barriers to the purchase of local food for some public schools, colleges, and universities, and put local farmers at a disadvantage.

The number of overweight children tripled in the last 30 years, leading to increases in diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. Rates of diabetes have tripled since 1980, resulting in nearly \$6,000 in average yearly medical costs per person and millions of lost work days.

THE LOCAL FARM PRODUCTS BILL WOULD:

Amend state purchasing laws to **INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL FARMERS TO SELL TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES** by:

- Creating a mechanism for school districts to use more products from Massachusetts farmers by increasing the maximum no-bid contract amount from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for purchasing from local farmers.
- Adding public colleges and universities to the state's local agriculture purchasing preference statute.
- Directing the Dept. of Agricultural Resources to collect data on schools and farms interested in participating in the farm-to-school program and helping to facilitate successful connections between interested parties.



JOIN THE CAMPAIGN!

- **SUPPORT** H4441 by contacting the MA Public Health Association.
- **SHARE** copies of this fact sheet with your colleagues and ask them to endorse.
- **CONTACT** Senate President Therese Murray and ask for her support:
Therese.Murray@state.ma.us, 617-722-1500, or State House Room 330, Boston MA 02133.

References: National Farm to School Network.