



Dear Mr. Catlin

As a local producer in Durango Colorado I talk often amongst my other farming peers and my customers (individuals and schools). Often the conversation turns to pricing and access. Being able to offer produce to schools and produce to lower income consumers who use SNAP benefits has been an important development that supports the local economy and health of the community in so many ways. Adding in the Double-up Bucks offered by Live Well Colorado and there is a tremendous opportunity to improve access to consumers who can benefit the most from healthy food while supporting farmers.

I have just completed this process of applications and despite being time consuming and complicated, which establishes a distinct barrier to entry, I feel it is a tremendous opportunity to participate. I am not sure all producers would be willing to overcome the current organizational barriers while also operating and scaling their own agricultural business.

I have just learned of the bill **HB17-1192** which would integrate the communication of the two existing committees: Colorado Food Systems Council and the Farm to School Task Force to streamline the process of sharing information and improving the application process for producers. From my perspective this is a great step in efficiency but also a high leverage opportunity to maximize participation of both food producers and local food consumers, both Farm to School and SNAP customers.

When so much state legislation seems controversial, political or counterproductive I was excited to see HB17-1192 causing me to take the time to write a letter and offer my enthusiastic support of this bill. I hope you will do the same!

With Respect,

Daniel Fullmer
March 1, 2017

My name is Meighen Lovelace. I am the Western Slope Producer Representative and the Vice Chair of the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council. I sit on the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Policy Council. I am on the Advisory Board for the Colorado Food Policy Network. I am a farmer, a mother, and a consumer.

I am writing this Letter in strong support of HB 1192. This bill will increase coordination among government agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations, and consumers. Integrating the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council and the Farm to School Task Force into one council housed in the Department of Agriculture will allow for a coordinated, cross sector approach to Colorado's food systems. HB 1192 will enhance the economic outcomes for agricultural producers and local/regional economies, as well as the health outcomes for consumers by increasing capacity and avoiding overlap.

As a mother of two small children farming in rural Colorado, I know how important it is to simplify and improve access to local and regional markets while providing communities access to locally grown, nutrient dense food. Colorado's agricultural industries grow local economies and build thriving communities while preserving our state's rich heritage.

I cannot understate the importance of research and assessment around food procurement, distribution, healthy food access, and regional food production to create successful environments for food systems across the state. The work of COFSAC is essential in elevating access to and efficiency of our 3rd largest economy. Everybody eats. Everybody benefits from locally grown food.

Thank you for supporting farmers, ranchers, and school children across Colorado.

With Gratitude,
Meighen Lovelace
Roaring Fork Farmers
Carbondale, Colorado



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Colorado House Committee Members

I am writing this letter in my role as current chair of the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC) in support of House Bill 1192 that would advance the mission and effectiveness of our COFSAC in several ways.

Almost ten years ago, I was privileged to be a part of a group who envisioned an organization like COFSAC, recognizing the need for a broad, multi-sector approach to addressing issues and improving our food system. In terms of CSU, our own Extension program has just developed a Food Systems team, and similarly, we knew we could benefit from a public sector team that would provide a similar cross-disciplinary advisory board for the whole set of food system stakeholders. Accordingly, CSU has been active with COFSAC since its inception, and has benefitted from this group's advisement. Although I have had less interaction with the Farm to School Task Force, it seemed like a very good option to meld these groups given the commonality of their missions.

The one aspect of COFSAC that has continued to present challenges is staffing issues. At first, LiveWell graciously provided staffing, and that worked well, although some may have perceived it led to more attention to issues at the heart of that organization. When LiveWell had to reallocate resources, CSU was asked to step in to both lead and staff the organization. Although we really did not have a dedicated person to do so, we felt so strongly about supporting COFSAC that we have done our best to reallocate some of our position time to provide baseline support (knowing CSU might also seem like an appropriate organization to staff the council as well). As much as we have attempted to rise to the challenge, our already time-consuming academic jobs and less frequent availability to Denver-based partners have meant staffing coverage has been stretched too thin.

I confidently believe that COFSAC could do so much more with a dedicated staff person, including follow up outreach on the Colorado Blueprint for Food and Agriculture that the current council has provided guidance on and will use to choose their priorities for the next few years (see <http://foodsystems.colostate.edu/research/colorado-blueprint/> for more details). Plus, if the level of attention and requests for advisement CSU receives in the area of Food Systems is any indicator, the public's interest and level of engagement in this area will only continue to grow, and particularly our state agency partners will need a coordinated approach to handling more public engagement.

As you can tell, my colleagues and I feel strongly that the potential for staffing COFSAC is a high priority investment as we consider ways that our state-level collaborations in the area of food systems could continue and be strengthened.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide more information or ideas of how this bill would invest in the future of food programming in Colorado.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dawn Thilmany McFadden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Dawn Thilmany McFadden, Professor

March 6, 2017

House Agriculture Committee Members:

USDA's seven regional offices serve to provide support and resources to the State Agencies that work with Child Nutrition programs. As such, our seven Farm to School Regional Leads work with each of the state agencies in their region to support Farm to School efforts in their states – the regional leads provide training and technical assistance, financial support (grants) and lead research/best practice dissemination.

We see state agencies as key to the dissemination of farm to school, farm to summer, and farm to CACFP since state agencies are the entities that work most closely with local education agencies to make the programs happen. One of our key objectives as the Office of Community Food Systems at USDA last year was: "FNS Strategic Objective 1.1b: Increase the level of engagement of state agencies in community food systems activities related to Child Nutrition Programs by 10% over baseline." And this year it is to "Maintain and support the level of engagement of state agencies in community food systems activities related to child nutrition programs." To do so we made state agency applications a priority in our USDA Farm to School grant applications for the 2017 round.

Sincerely,

Andrea Northup
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