



Proponent: HB 2564

February 2, 2024

Dear Chairman Rahjes and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources:

The Kansas Food and Farm Coalition enthusiastically supports the passage of HB 2564, which would expand the availability of Kansas-grown foods in our state's emergency food system.

The Farm to Food Bank program will be a win-win for Kansans. Kansas agricultural producers stand to benefit by having access to a new wholesale market channel in the state's food banks, and Kansas families in need will have more access to nutritious, locally-grown foods.

Here's why we are supporting HB 2564:

- **The Kansas Department of Agriculture is well-positioned to establish and implement an effective farm to food bank program.** They have successfully administered the federal Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement Program, a USDA program that awarded Kansas \$5,031,473. The Department has developed a network of producers and has ensured that food purchased by the grant is widely distributed across Kansas in rural and urban communities impacted by food insecurity.
- **The short-term federal LFPA program helped us build critical infrastructure for farm to food bank in the state.** HB 2564 will allow us to create a Kansas-specific program with our own guidelines, not the federal government's.
- **Kansas farmers will have access to a new wholesale market channel, allowing many to scale up their operations to meet the need.** 22 producers participated in the federal LFPA program, and we expect that number will grow as KDA implements a state program. Also, farmers who donate excess produce to the farm to food bank program will be able to provide food for people to eat, reducing on-farm food waste.
- **Food-insecure Kansans will have access to nutritious, locally grown foods.** 1 in 10 Kansans experience food insecurity and have been especially squeezed by record-high food inflation. The local food provided by this program would help Kansas' charitable food pantries serve the more than 219,000 Kansans that turn to them every month for food assistance.



The Kansas Food and Farm Coalition (FFC) is a group of long-standing Kansas nonprofit organizations concerned about our food system - from farm to fork. In recognition of how interwoven food system issues are, these organizations have come together to support policies that grow Kansas communities' local food systems. This includes policies that support small and mid-sized farms, increase production and sales of locally grown foods, increase access to healthy food for all, and improve food security in our communities.

Respectfully,

Kansas Food Action Network
Kansas Rural Center
KC Healthy Kids
Harvesters

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