



NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NOFA-NH Testimony for HB1678-FN: AN ACT establishing a New Hampshire farm to school local food incentive pilot program.

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire (NOFA-NH) is dedicated to helping people build local, just, and sustainable food systems by actively promoting organic, regenerative, ecologically sound farming, gardening, eating, and land care practices for healthy communities.

As a member of the NH Farm to School Network and a statewide association representing New Hampshire farmers, gardeners and eaters, NOFA-NH supports the Local Food for Local Schools Reimbursement Pilot Program. This program will:

- Increase food security and resilience in the Granite State.
- Provide farmers with new and increased market opportunities.
- Foster relationships between farmers and schools.
- Improve farm viability by infusing \$120,500 per year into New Hampshire's farm and food economy.
- Provide New Hampshire students with access to fresher, local, nutrient dense foods.
- Help students learn about local and seasonal foods through direct experience.
- Introduce students to careers in agriculture and food systems.
- And allow NH's public schools to receive financial reimbursement for \$1 out of every \$3 spent on food purchased from NH farmers, producers, and fishers, and \$1 out of every \$6 spent on New England grown, caught, or produced foods.

Over the last four years, we've seen how a largely import-based food economy can be affected by external conditions, leading to food insecurity. The Local Food for Local Schools Reimbursement Pilot Program will increase New Hampshire's food security while contributing to meeting the New England Feeding New England goal of producing 30% of our region's food by 2030. If the pilot program goes well, it will set the stage for broader institutional purchasing in future years.

In addition to the health benefits for children and families, HB1678-FN will help improve our agricultural economy and overall economy by keeping federal dollars in New Hampshire and increasing business for our state's essential farmers, producers, and fishers.

Please join New Hampshire's farmers, students, parents, educators, and food service providers by passing the Local Food for Local Schools Reimbursement Pilot Program.