



ALPHA RESOLUTION 2014-1

State Funding for Programs Improving Access to Alaska Fish and Farm Products

WHEREAS the Alaska Public Health Association is dedicated to promoting the advancement of public health to improve health and quality of life for all Alaskans; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Public Health Association recognizes the necessity of improving nutrition as a primary component of health; and

WHEREAS unhealthy eating contributes to overweight and obesity and a number of chronic conditions, including some cancers, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes;¹ and

WHEREAS sixty-seven percent (67%) of Alaska adults are overweight or obese and twenty-six percent (26%) of Alaska adolescents are overweight or obese;² and

WHEREAS the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 recommends Americans eat more fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet;³ and

WHEREAS seventy-seven percent (77%) of Alaska adults and seventy-nine percent (79%) of Alaska adolescents do not consume the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day;² and

WHEREAS access to farmers' markets, home and community gardens, and farm-to-institution programs has been shown to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables;^{4, 5} and

WHEREAS the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, Farm to School Program, was established in 2010 to work with schools and local producers to increase the market of local fish and farm products and increase access to healthy, local foods for Alaska's children; and

WHEREAS thirty Alaska school districts, representing approximately 378 individual schools with an estimated 115,952 children in attendance participated in farm to school activities;⁶ and

WHEREAS Alaska school districts participating in the Alaska Farm to School Program purchased \$75,000 of local food products in the 2011-2012 school year;⁵ and

WHEREAS the Nutritional Alaskan Foods for Schools Grant Program, administered by the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, was established in 2012 to provide funding for school districts to purchase healthy Alaska grown produce and fish from Alaskan waters.

¹ US Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*. Rockville, MD: HHS, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General; 2001.

² Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Alaska Obesity Facts Report – 2012. August 2012. Available at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Obesity/pubs/2012AlaskaObesityFacts.pdf>.

³ US Department of Agriculture and US Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Strategies to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases: The CDC Guide to Strategies to Increase the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables*. 2011.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States. *MMWR* 2009;58(No.RR-7).

⁶ US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. The Farm to School Census. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census>.

WHEREAS eleven percent (11%) of Alaska adults and fifteen percent (15%) of Alaska children lived in households that are food insecure;⁷ and

WHEREAS an average of 86,044 Alaskans participated in the Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (also known as the Food Stamp Program) each month in 2011;⁸ and

WHEREAS Alaskans who have more resources are more likely than those in poverty to engage in local food activities, such as harvesting wild foods, purchasing fresh foods from a farmers' market, or consuming foods from their own garden;⁹ and

WHEREAS farmers' markets that accept nutrition assistance program benefits, such as, SNAP and the Special Supplemental Nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons, improve access to fruits and vegetables for low income individuals and families;⁴ and

WHEREAS the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and the Division of Agriculture established the Alaska Farmers' Market Quest Program in 2011 to increase access to healthy, local foods for low income Alaskans and provide new sources of income for local farmers and small businesses; and

WHEREAS, because of the Alaska Farmers' Market Quest Program, approximately 1400 low income Alaskans used their SNAP benefits at local farmers' markets to purchase fresh, minimally processed, locally grown and made foods;¹⁰ and

WHEREAS the Alaska Farmers' Market Quest Program bolstered the local economy by bringing in nearly \$115,000 in SNAP, debit and credit sales to local farmers and small businesses during the 2013 market season alone;⁸ and

WHEREAS the Governor has made economic development and food security critical priorities for the state. In 2013 the Governor issued Administrative Order No. 265 establishing the Alaska Food Resource Working Group to recommend policies and measures to increase the purchase and consumption of local wild seafood and farm products; and

WHEREAS improving local food production and local consumption of Alaska fish and farm products promotes Alaskans' health, increases food security, strengthens the local economy, encourages community development, and protects natural resources;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association supports an adequate financial appropriation from the state to continue, strengthen and expand programs, such as the Alaska Farm to School Program, the Nutritional Alaskan Foods for Schools Grant Program, and the Alaska Farmers' Market Quest Program. These programs improve access to and affordability of healthy local fish and farm products for all Alaskans throughout the state,

⁷ Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Food Insecurity in Alaska. *Chronicle* No. 4, July, 2008. Contributed by: Charles J. Utermohle, PhD, Rebecca S. Wells, MS, Andrea Fenaughty, PhD. Available at <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/pubs/assets/ChroniclesV1-4.pdf>.

⁸ Food Research and Action Center. National and State Program Data Tool. Available at <http://frac.org/reports-2/>.

⁹ Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Alaska Obesity Facts: Local Foods. September 2013. Available at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Obesity/default.aspx>.

¹⁰ Personal communication with Kyla Byers, Alaska Farmers' Market Quest Program Manager, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture. 10/16/13.



including students and low income Alaskans, and the public health of all Alaskans will be positively impacted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association will promote and advocate for state funding support for programs that improve access to healthy local fish and farm products and engage in low and no-cost advocacy efforts for this purpose such as:

- Circulation of advocacy action requests to membership
- Circulation of advocacy action requests to partners and other individuals
- Posting of ALPHA resolutions on the Alaska Public Health Association's website and/or making this resolution available
- Participation in email advocacy campaigns
- Contact with policy makers via phone, letter, email and/or in-person meetings
- Public testimony in legislative hearings, town hall meetings, and other public forums
- Contribution of op-ed articles and/or letters to the editor
- Contributions to radio programs via calling-in or scheduled interviews
- Distribution of this resolution statement to policy makers and key officials

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the position of the Alaska Public Health Association until it is withdrawn or modified by a subsequent resolution.

Fiscal & Public Health Impact Statement

Fiscal Impact on ALPHA: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to the Governor and key political leaders.

Public Health Impact: Improving access to Alaska fish and farm products promotes Alaskans' health, increases food security, strengthens the local economy, encourages community development, and protects natural resources.