

## **Local Farms – Healthy Kids – SB 6483**

**Local Farms – Healthy Kids** establishes Washington as a national leader in promoting local food policy.

By increasing the amount of Washington-grown food consumed through our schools, food banks and farmers markets, this bill will help keep working farms working and promote new awareness of how our food choices affect our health, communities, and the environment. Increasing consumption of food that has been grown and produced locally reduces packaging, refrigeration, storage and transportation, requiring less energy and resulting in less waste.

A broad coalition of environmental, farming, school and public health interests worked together to push the effort through. Despite staunch opposition from the Processed Food Industry, the bill moved reached final passage largely intact. Through a series of changes to existing purchasing laws and creation of new programs, the Local Farms – Healthy Kids Act is one of the most comprehensive and far-reaching efforts in the country to promote state-level local food policy. Specifically, the legislation:

- 1 **Eases state and school procurement restrictions to better enable school districts and state entities to choose local.**
  - Eliminates low-cost bidding requirements for school purchases of Washington-grown food and allows schools to adopt price preferences for local food,
  - Requires development of food procurement procedures for state entities to encourage and facilitate purchasing of Washington grown food to the maximum extent practicable, and
  - Requires all state food contracts to include a plan to maximize the availability of Washington grown food purchased through the contract.
- 2 **Establishes a Farm to School Program that will facilitate the purchasing of Washington-grown farm products by schools.**
  - Program includes 2 \_ FTEs in the Dept. of Agriculture that will coordinate with the Superintendent of Public Instruction and Department of Health,
  - Program will work with schools and farmers to promote school purchasing, assist farmers in marketing to schools, and provide curricula on the nutritional and environmental benefits of consuming locally grown food.
- 3 **Creates the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program.** Provides \$600,000 per year in grant funds to elementary schools with high numbers of low-income students to make available a locally-grown fruit and vegetable snack program.
- 4 **Promotes school gardens.** Authorizes schools to grow food for consumption in their regular snack and meal programs, and requires school garden programs to include education about organic and conventional growing methods.
- 5 **Establishes a Farmers Market Technology Program.** Provides \$50,000 for the purchase of wireless technology to allow farmers markets to accept both food stamps and credit cards.
- 6 **Establishes three Farm to food Bank pilot programs.** Allocates \$350,000 to establish three pilots allowing food banks to contract with farmers for a steady supply of fresh-locally grown food.
- 7 **Expands and increases funding for the Farmers Market Nutrition Program.** Requires the Dept. of Health to establish rules for farm stores to participate in the program, and provides an additional \$200,000 in coupons to allow low income seniors and women with infant children to shop at farmers markets.

**Funding:** \$1,490,000 was appropriated to implement the legislation.