HR-76
Submitted on: 3/29/2026 8:45:20 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Kauai Women's Caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support HR76 & HCR84, removing carcinogens from school meals and providing a plant-protein option, in pursuit of helathier lives for our children and grandchildren and ultimately a lesss toxic planet.

S.E.E.D. America

Affordable, High-Nutrition School Meals Through Indoor, Solar-Powered Food Production Systems with an Integrated Media-Based Funding Strategy

The **SEED** Initiative**:** Sustainable Energy & Education Development
"Seeds grow seeds." - "From Seed to System." **-** "Plant the seed. Build the system. Grow the future."
"With each seed we plant…human or literal…we grow more seeds. And together, we grow the future."

Concept Overview

Schools can significantly improve student nutrition while reducing food costs by growing most or all of their own food in fully controlled indoor grow rooms powered by solar energy with battery backup systems on or near school campuses. By focusing on fast-growing, nutrient-dense crops, schools can create simple, affordable meals that are both healthy and scalable, while maintaining independence from external supply disruptions. A key advantage of this approach is that students can actively participate in the process. Working in controlled grow rooms provides hands-on learning in:

- Biology
- Agriculture
- Sustainability
- Food production
- Renewable energy systems

Students gain practical experience while helping supply the school cafeteria, creating a self-reinforcing system where education and food production directly support each other. This model is designed to produce nearly all core ingredients on-site. Any additional items that cannot be efficiently grown indoors can be sourced externally, but overall reliance on outside food sources is greatly reduced.

Best Crops for Indoor Controlled Grow Rooms

To maximize efficiency, yield, and nutritional value in a controlled indoor environment, schools should focus on crops that grow quickly, require minimal space, and produce high nutrient output:

Primary Crop Categories

- **Legumes (Primary Protein Source):**
  Beans, peas, lentils, mung beans (including sprouts)
- **Leafy Greens (Fast-Growing and Nutrient-Dense):**
  Spinach, kale, lettuce, Swiss chard
- **Microgreens (Ultra-Efficient Production):**
  Radish, broccoli, sunflower microgreens, Okra
- **Fruit Vegetables (For Variety and Vitamins):**
  Cherry tomatoes, peppers
- **Herbs (For Flavor and Added Nutrition):**
  Basil, cilantro, parsley

These crops are well-suited for hydroponic or vertical farming systems and can be grown year-round with consistent output.

Simple, Low-Cost Meal Options

Using these ingredients, schools can prepare nutritious, plant-based meals that are easy to cook in large quantities (and even snack-based meals like "Salad Bar" a nutrient rich bar):

Meal	Key Ingredients	Benefits	Icon/Visual Idea
Bean & Vegetable Stew	Beans, leafy greens, tomatoes, seasonings	High protein & fiber, low cost, bulk prep	Bowl of stew with vegetables
Bean Wraps/Burritos	Beans, greens, vegetables, tortillas	Portable, student-friendly, balanced & filling	Wrap or burrito icon
Fresh Salad Bowls	Lettuce, greens, microgreens, beans	No cooking, high vitamins & minerals	Salad bowl with colorful greens
Vegetable Pasta with Greens & Beans	Pasta, greenhouse veggies, legumes	Familiar, scalable for large groups	Pasta plate with veggies
Lentil Soup	Lentils, greens, herbs	High protein, quick, affordable	Soup bowl with steam
Grain & Protein Bowls	Beans/lentils, rice/grains, vegetables	Complete nutrition, flexible ingredients	Bowl with grains and vegetables

Growing Systems and Energy Model - This system is designed around full indoor control and energy independence:

Hydroponic and Vertical Farming Systems

- Maximize space efficiency
- Accelerate growth cycles
- Reduce water usage

Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA)

- Precise control of light, temperature, humidity, and nutrients
- Ensures consistent, year-round production

Solar Power with Battery Backup

- Provides renewable energy for lighting, water systems, and climate control
- Ensures continuous operation even during outages
- Reduces long-term operational costs
- Increases system resilience

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Educational and Community Benefits - This model provides a wide range of benefits beyond food production:

- Students gain hands-on experience in science, agriculture, and renewable energy systems
- Encourages healthier eating habits through direct involvement with food production
- Builds responsibility, teamwork, and practical life skills
- Integrates into curriculum (STEM, sustainability, and workforce training)
- Creates opportunities for student-led programs, credits, or specialized classes
- Reduces dependence on external food systems

Cost Efficiency and Long-Term Sustainability - While there is an initial investment required to set up:

- Indoor grow rooms
- Hydroponic systems
- Battery backup systems
- Solar power infrastructure

This upfront funding leads to significant long-term savings.

Once Established

- The need to purchase food from external sources is dramatically reduced
- Energy costs are minimized through solar generation (additional stored power can be used for school operations)
- Labor costs are offset through student participation as part of structured educational programs
- Ongoing costs are primarily limited to maintenance, nutrients, and system upkeep

Additional Funding Support

- Grants
- Partnerships
- State or Government Funding
- Donations directed into a dedicated program account for maintenance and expansion

Over time, the system becomes increasingly self-sustaining, providing both economic and operational stability.

Conclusion - By producing most of their food through fully indoor, solar-powered growing systems, schools can create a sustainable, resilient, and cost-effective food program. This approach:

- Delivers nutritious meals
- Reduces long-term expenses
- Serves as a powerful educational platform

With student involvement and strategic crop selection, schools can feed their populations while equipping students with valuable real-world skills in sustainability, agriculture, and technology.

Estimated Initial Setup and Operational Model

(Serving ~1,000 People Daily)

This outline provides a realistic, scalable estimate for building a fully indoor, controlled-environment food production system capable of feeding approximately 1,000 students and staff with three meals per day plus snacks.

1. Facility Construction (Indoor Grow + Food Prep Building)

Size Estimate

- Approximately 20,000–30,000 square feet total
  - 60% grow rooms
  - 20% food prep and kitchen
  - 10% storage (dry + cold)
  - 10% classrooms/workspaces

Cost Estimate

- $200–$350 per square foot

Total: $4 million – $10 million

2. Indoor Growing Systems (Hydroponics & Vertical Farming)

Includes

- LED grow lighting systems
- Vertical racks and grow towers
- Monitoring and automation systems
- Irrigation and nutrient delivery systems
- Climate control (HVAC, humidity, CO_2 systems)

Cost Estimate: Total: $1 million – $3 million

- $80–$150 per square foot of grow space

3. Solar Power System + Battery Backup

System Requirements

- Solar array: ~250–400 kW system
- Battery storage: 1–2 days backup capacity
- Estimated load: 300–600 kWh/day (lighting, HVAC, pumps)

Includes

- Inverters
- Solar panels
- Battery storage system
- Installation and electrical integration

Total Cost Estimate: $750,000 – $2 million

4. Kitchen & Food Processing Equipment

Includes

- Commercial kitchen appliances (ovens, steamers, mixers)
- Bulk cooking equipment (large pots, kettles)
- Refrigeration and freezer units
- Food prep stations
- Storage systems
- Composting

Total Cost Estimate: $500,000 – $1.5 million

5. Water Systems

Includes

- Storage tanks
- Filtration systems
- Optional water recycling systems

Total Cost Estimate: $100,000 – $300,000

6. Initial Seeds, Nutrients, and Supplies

Includes

- Nutrient solutions
- Growing mediums
- Seeds for all crop cycles

Total Cost Estimate: $25,000 – $75,000

7. Labor & Training (Startup Phase)

Includes

- Staff training programs
- System setup specialists
- Curriculum development for student integration

Total Cost Estimate: $200,000 – $500,000

Total Estimated Initial Investment

- **Low Estimate:** ~$6.5 million
- **High Estimate:** ~$17 million

Daily Food Production Targets (Serving ~1,000 People)

Goal: 3 meals plus 1–2 snacks per person daily

Estimated Daily Output Needs

- Microgreens: 50–100 lbs
- Leafy greens: 300–500 lbs
- Beans/legumes (dry equivalent): 150–250 lbs
- Vegetables (tomatoes, peppers): 200–300 lbs

Example Daily Meal Structure

Meal Time	Menu Items	Notes / Benefits	Icon / Visual Idea
Breakfast	Smoothies (greens + externally sourced fruit if needed), Whole grains or simple plant-based options	Quick, nutrient-rich start to the day	Smoothie cup, bowl of grains
Lunch	Bean-based wraps or bowls, Fresh salads with microgreens	High protein, fresh vegetables, student-friendly	Wrap icon, salad bowl
Dinner	Lentil or bean stew, Vegetable-based pasta or grain bowls	Balanced, hearty, scalable for groups	Bowl of stew, plate of pasta
Snacks (Produced On-Site)	Fresh salads or mini wraps, Microgreen servings, Roasted legumes, Smoothies, Salad Bar	On-site, healthy, versatile	Snack icons, microgreens, small wrap
Optional Addition	Honey production (educational beekeeping)	Supports learning about pollinators, natural sweetener production	Beehive / honey jar icon

Benefits

- Supports pollinator awareness
- Natural sweetener production
- Additional hands-on agricultural education

Estimated Cost: $5,000 – $20,000 startup

Operational Model and Sustainability

- Food production significantly offsets cafeteria costs
- System operates year-round with consistent output
- Solar energy reduces or eliminates long-term electricity expenses
- Students participate in growing, harvesting, and food preparation as part of structured coursework

Long-Term Financial Impact

Although the initial investment is substantial, the long-term savings are significant:

- Lower energy costs due to solar infrastructure
- Major reduction in externally sourced food costs
- Opportunities for grants, partnerships, and donations
- Labor is partially integrated into educational programs

Over time, the system can approach near self-sufficiency with predictable and stable operating costs.

Conclusion

A fully indoor, solar-powered food production system for a school of 1,000 people is a large but achievable investment.

It creates a closed-loop system where:

- Education
- Sustainability
- Food production

All work together.

With proper planning and execution, the school can provide daily nutritious meals, reduce long-term costs, and equip students with valuable real-world skills.

Supplemental Funding Strategy Through Media Production and Distribution

Overview

In addition to traditional funding methods, the entire system outlined above can be fully financed and potentially generate surplus capital through a strategic media production and distribution initiative. At the center of this approach is the development and release of a high-impact film project designed not only for entertainment, but as a primary funding engine for the program's implementation, expansion, and long-term sustainability.

Film-Based Funding Strategy

The production and distribution of a commercially viable film presents a unique opportunity to fund the full buildout of the system.

If executed effectively, the film would be distributed through:

- United States theatrical release (initial launch)
- Followed by online and streaming platforms

This dual-distribution model creates multiple revenue streams capable of:

- Covering the entire initial capital investment
- Providing ongoing funding for operations and maintenance
- Supporting scalable expansion into additional schools and regions

Key Success Factors

The financial success of this strategy depends on several critical elements:

- Broad audience appeal
- Adding Joe's marketing intellectual property (IP) into the film
- Provides strategic positioning for maximum commercial performance

By aligning the film with highly marketable and emotionally compelling IP, the project can significantly outperform typical theatrical and digital releases. The objective is to maximize engagement, visibility, and monetization across all distribution channels.

Partnership Opportunities

Strategic partnerships play a vital role in amplifying the project's success. Key partners may include:

- Major theatrical distributors
- Humanitarian or philanthropic organizations
- Online streaming and digital distribution platforms

These partnerships enhance:

- Global visibility
- Audience reach
- Revenue potential
- Marketing and promotional support

Additionally, involvement from a recognized humanitarian or philanthropic organization can provide:

- Initial backing
- Credibility and trust
- Alignment with mission-driven impact goals

Financial Structure - The model is designed to minimize risk while maximizing sustainability:

- Initial funding provided by a large organization or strategic partner
- Film revenues structured to repay the initial investment in full
- A first-position return structure can be implemented to prioritize investor repayment
- Reduced financial exposure through a self-liquidating funding mechanism

This ensures that the project is not dependent on continuous external funding once operational.

Long-Term Expansion Model - Beyond initial cost recovery, the model transitions into a growth engine:

- Surplus profits reinvested into additional schools and infrastructure
- Scalable replication across multiple regions
- Creation of a continuous, self-sustaining funding pipeline

This allows the system to expand organically without requiring ongoing fundraising efforts.

Final Integrated Conclusion - This model represents a fully integrated system where:

- Media (film production and distribution)
- Education (school-based implementation)
- Sustainability (self-funded growth model)

are unified into a single operational framework.

Storytelling becomes the funding mechanism.

Through this structure, content creation directly finances real-world infrastructure, establishing a self-sustaining cycle of growth, impact, and reinvestment…where each successful release expands the system's reach and benefits more communities over time. This is how sustainability works.

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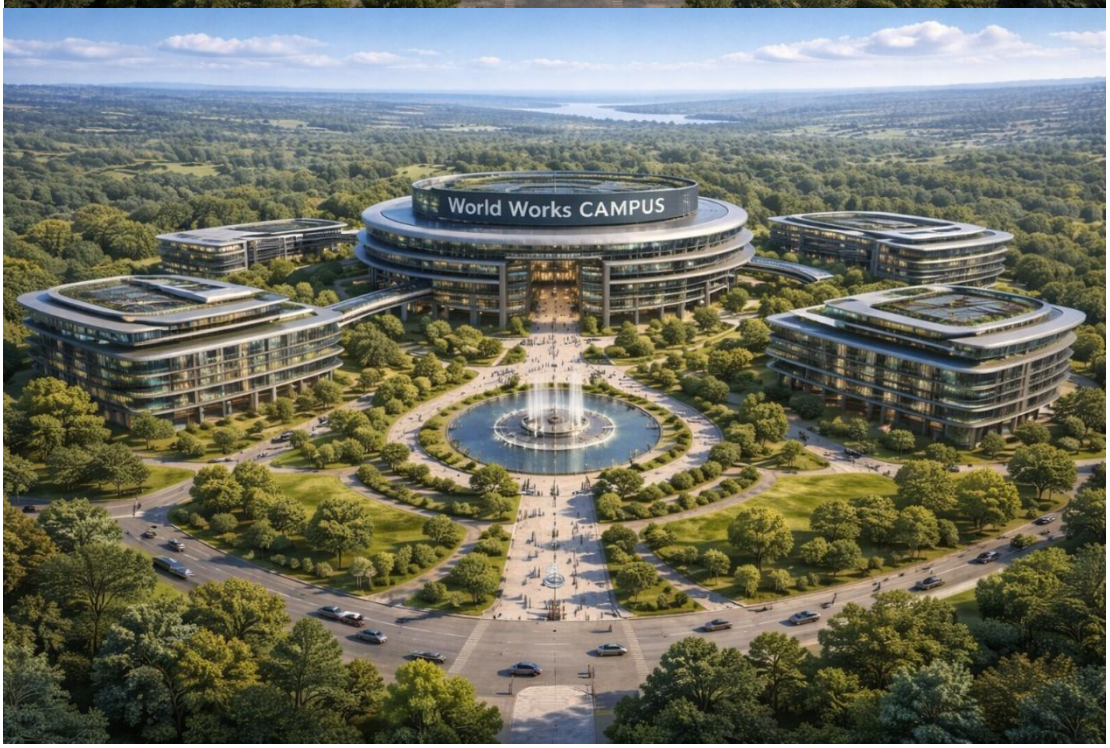
Theres always a bigger plan to help everyone.



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Introduction to World Works Entertainment

World Works Entertainment is a state-integrated media and technology production ecosystem designed to unify all participating states into one as a national media production network under a purpose-driven, for profit-based humanitarian model. As a nationwide investment platform, it develops and operates vertically integrated film, television, digital media, streaming, and technology infrastructure, all managed in-house to ensure efficiency, cost stability, quality control, and long-term workforce development. The initiative is structured through a Four-Tier studio campus system…Super, Mega, Mini, and Shared Regional Campuses…allowing scalable and inclusive deployment across states. Each campus functions as a self-contained ecosystem with modern green housing, training academies, AI and production labs, renewable energy systems, and nationwide distribution capabilities.

World Works Entertainment's mission is to generate meaningful employment, strengthen domestic media production, and deliver lasting economic and community benefits. Uniquely, 100% of profits are reinvested into state infrastructure and strategic initiatives, including first responder support, cleanup and beautification programs, job creation, affordable housing for workers, and housing/rehabilitation centers for the homeless, and workforce development programs within the studio campuses designed to help address homelessness across participating states. By combining media production, sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy, and equitable reinvestment, World Works Entertainment operates as both a premium content producer and a nationwide engine for economic growth, technological advancement, and long-term social impact.

The World Works Entertainment Campus will be located adjacent to and behind the World Works Entertainment offices. The campus will function as an integrated community living and education hub designed to support workforce development and long-term residential needs. Development will be strategically scaled based on state location, regional demographics, and projected production demand. Each campus will incorporate variable-sized office facilities, residential housing, workforce training centers, and sound stages tailored to the specific economic and production requirements of each state. In addition, designated acreage will be allocated for outdoor training environments, backlot sets, and specialized stunts and large-scale production activities. This model is designed to serve as a sustainable economic stimulus initiative for participating U.S. states, supporting job creation, infrastructure growth, and long-term community benefits.

Thinking 100% of profits reinvested won't help the economy? That's as useless as thinking AI will work without code or storage…can't compute, can't remember, going nowhere. There's no sustainable future without it. Media, entertainment, and minerals are among the most powerful industries driving the world…so let's use them to grow the economy and create a better future for everyone. WE US ALL TOGETHER…FAMILY

SUPPORTING HR76 AND HCR84

House Committee on Education
HR76 and HCR84 Hearing on March 31, 2026 at 2:00 pm
Conference Room 309 and videoconference

My name is John Kawamoto, and I support these resolutions because carcinogens should not be included in lunches and other meals served by the Department of Education.

Processed meat, such as hot dogs, pepperoni, bologna, salami, and turkey ham, which are regularly served in school lunches, is categorized as a Group 1 carcinogen by the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). There is sufficient evidence that processed meat causes cancer in humans. Other Group 1 carcinogens include cigarette smoke, asbestos, and diesel engine exhaust.

Processed meat is carcinogenic not because of the meat itself, but because of how it is made. Methods such as curing, smoking, fermenting, or adding preservatives like nitrates and nitrites can lead to the formation of dangerous compounds, including nitrosamines and nitrosamides. These compounds are well-established carcinogens.

It is important to note that nitrates and nitrites themselves are not inherently harmful. In fact, they occur naturally in vegetables like spinach, kale, and beets. The difference is context. Vegetables contain vitamin C, antioxidants, and polyphenols that block the formation of carcinogenic compounds. That is why diets rich in vegetables are consistently linked to lower cancer risk, while diets high in processed meat are linked to higher risk.

Nationally, schools are beginning to take proactive measures to reduce or eliminate processed meat from their meals. Farm-to-School programs bring locally grown fruits, vegetables, and whole foods into lunch menus, reducing reliance on processed meat. Some districts are replacing processed meat with tasty plant-based proteins

Other school systems have gone even further. The Santa Barbara Unified School District has eliminated processed meat from lunch menus, and New York City has adopted local food standards that ban processed meat.

Schools are also starting to engage students through taste tests, gardening programs, and cooking activities, which help make healthier, less processed options more appealing.

These resolutions would implement a staged removal of processed meat, with a goal of full elimination from school lunch programs by 2032. This approach balances practical feasibility with public health urgency, allowing schools to transition gradually to safer, healthier proteins while maintaining student participation in meal programs.

School meals should nourish and protect students, not expose them to known carcinogens. Removing processed meat from school lunches is an evidence-based, achievable step toward healthier, safer school meals.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge the committee to pass these resolutions.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/29/2026 1:19:27 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gordon LaBedz	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

MARCH WAS COLON CANCER AWARENESS MONTH.

Please support our school lunch administration in removing these dangerous (but popular) foods from school lunches. Not all education takes place in the classroom, education should take place in the cafeteria also. Processed meats (and cigarettes) are known risk factors for colon cancer.

Gordon LaBedz, MD

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:58:42 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee,

Every school day, tens of thousands of students in Hawai‘i rely on school meals for a significant portion of their daily nutrition. For many of our keiki, what they eat at school matters deeply — not just on the day, but for their long-term health.

That’s why it’s concerning that processed meats — like hot dogs, bacon, ham, and deli meats — are still being served in our public schools. The World Health Organization has classified processed meat as a Group 1 carcinogen, meaning there’s clear evidence it causes cancer. These foods often contain preservatives like nitrates and nitrites, which are prone to form cancer-causing compounds in the body.

To be clear, this resolution doesn’t call for an overnight ban. It takes a thoughtful, practical approach. It asks the Department of Education to study current menus, identify healthier protein alternatives, consider costs, and develop a plan to phase out processed meats by 2032 — or ensure that healthier options, including fiber-rich proteins, are always available.

Hawai‘i has already made meaningful progress for the health of our children by expanding access to school meals, and by working to incorporate more fresh, local foods. HCR 84 and HR 76 are a natural next step that builds on that momentum.

Other school systems across the country are already moving in this direction, showing that healthier meals can be both feasible and well accepted by students.

Our keiki are especially vulnerable to the long-term impacts of diet. Habits formed in childhood go deep and can last a lifetime. By improving school meals, we support not only our childrens' ability to learn and thrive today, but their future health and longevity.

All in all, this is a measured, science-based step to better protect our children. I respectfully urge your support of HCR 84 and HR 76.

Mahalo,

Victoria Anderson

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/25/2026 7:22:35 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Climate Protectors Hawai‘i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!

Let's stop feeding Class 1 carcinogens to our school Keiki!

Please pass these resolutions!

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/27/2026 8:22:20 AM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tessa Juhl	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HR76 & HCR84, removing carcinogens from school meals and providing a plant-protein option. It's important to protect our children and our responsibility to prevent degenerative diseases.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/27/2026 11:23:14 AM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
katherine skow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parent and former teacher, I support HR76 & HCR84 (removing carcinogens from school meals and providing a plant-protein option). We've learned how harmful the carcinogens in processed meats are for everyone! Please approve this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Katherine

Stephanie Skow, MD

Board Certified Psychiatrist, Plant-Based Physician & Educator

3/28/26

Aloha Representative Woodson, Representative La Chica and Committee members,

My name is Stephanie Skow, and my clinic supports **resolution HCR84 and HR76**, Removing Carcinogens from School Meals, and having a plant-protein option.

Why is a plant-protein option important?

1. **Cancer:** The World Health Organization has recognized meat and especially processed meat as carcinogens, cancer causing agents, with processed meat in the Group 1A category, the same category as cigarette smoking and asbestos. Plant proteins reduce your risk of cancer.
2. **Obesity: a Public Health Crisis:** improves with plant-based eating.
3. **Type II Diabetes:** preventable and reversable with a plant-based diet.
4. **Heart Disease:** preventable and reversable with a plant-based diet.
5. **Acne and asthma:** can improve with a plant-based diet.
6. **Erectile dysfunction**: can improve with a plant-based diet.
7. **Gut microbiome**: improves with a plant-based diet.
8. **Pollution:** improves with a plant-based diet.
9. **Greenhouse gas emissions**: improve with a plant-based diet.
10. **Land stewardship**: improves with plant-based eating.

I urge the Committee to pass this resolution.

Thank you,
Stephanie Skow, MD

Please see the attachment for supporting information.

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T (808) 634-2376 F (808)245-6495

ATTACHMENT

Risks of animal meat:

"Heme iron (found in meat) has been shown to be associated with many health outcomes such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, fatal coronary heart disease, and cancer." BMJ, British Medical Journal, 2017. "High heme intake is associated with increased risk of several cancers, including colorectal cancer, pancreatic cancer, and lung cancer." *Nutrients, 2014 Mar 13;6(3):1080-102*.

In addition, forever chemicals that are found throughout the environment, such as dioxins, are stored in fatty tissues of animals, and cause disease when consumed.

Benefits and nutrients in plant-based foods:

Essential nutrients found in plants include non-heme iron, all essential amino acids, the highest quality protein, as plant protein is packed with fiber and antioxidants. Animal protein is packed with cholesterol and saturated fat.

Plants also contain folate, potassium, Mg, Ca, and polyphenols, and antioxidants, and pre-biotics, pro-biotics, and vitamins, including vitamin C, which is not found in meat; and zinc, selenium, and iodine.

Free range and regenerative grazing:

Grazing **increases** greenhouse gas emissions with the methane produced from the cow's burping. "Methane released directly into the atmosphere is more than 80 times more potent than CO_2 over a 20-year time horizon." *UNEP Oct. 2021*

"Raising livestock for human consumption uses nearly 70% of agricultural land, contributing to deforestation, biodiversity loss and water pollution." *University of CO, Boulder.* Rewilding the cattle pastures and the crop lands used to grow animal feed will capture 8.1 billion metric tonnes of CO2 each year, freeing up 76% of agriculture land on the planet.

It takes a lot less land to feed 8 billion humans vs. 88 billion land animals.

Environmental Stewardship:

Transitioning to plant-based eating leads to ultimate stewardship of our lands, with rewilding and/or growing foods which are native to the islands, and do not create pollution, disease, and animal waste.

Rewilding programs contribute to fire mitigation by restoring ecosystems to their natural states, reducing flammable vegetation, and promoting interactions between species.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/27/2026 2:28:22 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kambria Beck Holder	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

03/27/2026

My name is Kambria Beck Holder, and I am a board-certified family physician practicing in Kapa‘a on Kauai. I support HR76 & HCR84, requiring the department of education to create a plan that removes carcinogens from school meals and provide a plant-protein option.

The children I serve are facing a preventable health crisis that begins, in part, with what we feed them at school. Nearly 20% of U.S. children and adolescents aged 2 to 19 years now live with obesity — a rate that has more than tripled since the 1960s. Among children aged 5 to 14 years, over one-third are overweight or obese. Predictive models estimate that if current trends hold, 57% of today's children will have obesity by age 35. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes among youth aged 10 to 19 nearly doubled between 2001 and 2017 — a 95% relative increase in just 16 years. Approximately 18% of adolescents aged 12 to 18 already have prediabetes. These children face decades of complications including kidney disease, retinopathy, neuropathy, and cardiovascular disease. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines have noted that eating patterns lower in red and processed meats are associated with lower risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.

Processed Meat Is a Known Carcinogen

In 2015, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified processed meat — including hot dogs, bacon, sausage, bologna, ham, and deli meats — as a Group 1 carcinogen, the same category as tobacco smoking and asbestos. This classification was based on sufficient evidence that processed meat causes colorectal cancer in humans. The World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research have concluded that the link between processed meat and colorectal cancer is "convincing." The American Cancer Society reports that the risk of colorectal cancer increases by approximately 18% with each 50-gram daily serving of processed meat — roughly the equivalent of a single hot dog. The carcinogens in processed meat are well characterized. Nitrates and nitrites, added as preservatives and color fixatives to luncheon meats, hot dogs, and ham, are converted in the gut to N-nitrosamines — compounds that cause direct, oxidative DNA damage. Heterocyclic aromatic amines and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, formed during high-heat cooking, are additional mutagens. Heme iron in red meat catalyzes the formation of these carcinogenic compounds.

A recent age-stratified study found that early childhood represents a critical window of vulnerability for exposure to dietary N-nitrosamines, with processed meats being the primary source. Children as young as 12 months showed concerning margins of exposure, and the highest mean intake of the carcinogen N-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) was observed at 48 months of age. The authors concluded that early childhood is a critical period for reducing exposure to dietary carcinogens.

We would not allow tobacco products in our schools. We should not allow known carcinogens in our school cafeterias.

Plant Protein Options

The evidence supporting plant-based protein as a healthier alternative is strong and growing. A systematic review and meta-analysis published in JAMA Internal Medicine found that greater adherence to plant-based dietary patterns was significantly associated with a reduced risk of developing type 2 diabetes. These benefits operate through multiple mechanisms: improved insulin sensitivity, reduced systemic inflammation, lower long-term weight gain, and healthier gut microbiome composition.

The American Diabetes Association's 2026 Standards of Care notes that growing evidence supports replacing animal protein with plant protein to lower the risk of all-cause and cardiovascular mortality, and that a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials showed that replacing animal proteins with plant proteins leads to improvements in hemoglobin A1C and fasting glucose in adults with type 2 diabetes.

A systematic review of interventional trials found that plant-predominant eating patterns demonstrated improved weight control and cardiometabolic outcomes — including better lipid profiles, blood pressure, insulin sensitivity, and fasting glucose — compared with usual diets and, in some cases, compared with standard health-oriented diets such as those recommended by the American Heart Association and the American Diabetes Association.

Providing a plant protein option at school meals is not about eliminating choice. It is about ensuring that every child has access to a nutritious, evidence-based alternative.

Schools Are a Critical Intervention Point

Children consume up to half of their daily calories at school. For many children — particularly those from low-income families — school meals may be their most reliable source of nutrition. This makes school nutrition policy one of the most powerful public health levers available to this legislature. Children from lower-income households bear a disproportionate burden of both obesity and type 2 diabetes. Improving the quality of those meals is an equity issue as much as it is a health issue.

As a family physician, I have watched the consequences of poor childhood nutrition unfold across generations. I have diagnosed type 2 diabetes in teenagers. I have counseled families

struggling with childhood obesity in communities where healthy food options are scarce. I have seen the trajectory of chronic disease that begins in childhood and accelerates through adulthood. We have the evidence and the opportunity to act. Our children's health — and their futures — depend on the choices we make for them today.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Kambria Beck Holder, MD
Board-Certified Family Medicine and Lifestyle Medicine Physician

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:31:34 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matt Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Rep. Woodson, Rep. La Chica, and Committee Members,

My name is Matt Nelson and I support **resolution HCR84 and HR76**, Removing Carcinogens from School Meals.

Risks of animal meat:

"Heme iron (found in meat) has been shown to be associated with many health outcomes such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, fatal coronary heart disease, and cancer." BMJ, British Medical Journal, 2017. "High heme intake is associated with increased risk of several cancers, including **colorectal cancer, pancreatic cancer, and lung cancer**." *Nutrients, 2014 Mar 13;6(3):1080-102*.

In addition, forever chemicals that are found throughout the environment, such as dioxins, are stored in fatty tissues of animals, and cause disease when consumed.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Matt Nelson,

Kapaa, HI

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/29/2026 8:45:00 AM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Cox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HR76 & HCR84, removing carcinogens from school meals and providing a plant-protein option. It seems like an obvious decision to protect our keiki from carcinogens and also offer a healthy plant-based option. Mahalo for your consideration.

Helen Cox, Kalaheo

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/29/2026 1:20:19 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Zelkovsky	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HR76 & HCR84, removing carcinogens from school meals and providing a plant-protein option. Children's health must be the prime goal, prevention is the only way. Healthy food is key for people of all ages, especially for children, set them on the right path to health and avoid illness.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/29/2026 1:34:29 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanilea Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HR76 & HCR84, removing carcinogens from school meals and providing a plant-protein option.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/29/2026 11:47:22 PM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Corby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass these 2 bills: HCR84 and HR76. It should be a no-brainer that we don't want to serve vulnerable school children, cancer causing ingredients like processed meats. Protein options in school lunches should be evidence based healthy options like un-processed meat/fish and a plant-based protein option. Please remove the carcinogenic processed meats and include a plant protein option. Thank you

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/30/2026 7:33:34 AM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Kuwahara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution but think the timeline should move up as 2032 is a long time to make this switch. Schools should eliminate processed meats from the menu because the DOE should not be serving known Group 1 carcinogens to children. Federally subsidized meals should promote health, not cause health problems.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:13:24 AM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Senyk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of the committee—my name is Natalie Senyk, and I'm a personal trainer and health coach on Kaua'i. I support HR76 & HCR84 requesting the Department of Education remove processed meats (a Group 1 carcinogen) from school meals and work toward offering a whole-food, minimally processed plant-protein option for students.

In my work, I see how powerfully food choices affect energy, blood sugar stability, recovery, and long-term health—especially for kids who rely on school meals as a consistent source of nutrition. Processed meats have been classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer, and school meals should reflect the highest standard of safety and health promotion.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge you to support HR76 & HCR84.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/30/2026 9:43:08 AM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Tibbetts	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HR76 & HCR84, removing carcinogens from school meals. Please pass this resolution.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:34:17 AM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Leveen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HR76 & HCR84, removing carcinogens from school meals.

HR-76
Submitted on: 3/30/2026 10:42:56 AM
Testimony for EDN on 3/31/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Flora Worth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.