

ACT 218

S.B. NO. 376

A Bill for an Act Relating to a Farm to School Program.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that at least twenty states have established farm to school programs and coordinator positions to improve the health of children through the support of school gardens, health and nutrition education, agriculture, and the procurement of locally grown foods for school meals and snacks. A successful farm to school program can increase students' physical activity, school meal participation, and preference for fresh fruits and vegetables and improve academic achievement and student behavior.

The legislature further finds that Oregon, a national leader in the farm to school movement, has full-time farm to school coordinators in Oregon's department of agriculture and department of education. The coordinators work together and with stakeholders to increase educational opportunities and the procurement of locally grown foods for schools, encouraging the students' consumption of locally grown foods.

The legislature additionally finds that farm to school activities support a nutritious school food environment, and more than eighty-five per cent of the youth in Hawaii attend public schools. Students who participate in farm to school activities are more likely to be familiar with, have a preference for, and consume more fruits and vegetables at school and at home. Establishing healthy behaviors at an early age may prevent the onset of chronic disease and other health conditions later in life. The leading causes of death in Hawaii are heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, illnesses that are often associated with dietary behaviors. Investing in the health of children will help them to achieve greater educational attainment and lead to stronger communities. Moreover, Act 55, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013, encourages the purchase and use of Hawaii-grown food and food products by residents, businesses, and governmental bodies. Increasing the procurement of local agricultural products for schools has the added benefit of supporting the State's agricultural economy by providing an additional revenue source for local farmers.

The purpose of this Act is to create a farm to school program in the department of agriculture and to provide funding for a farm to school coordinator position to oversee the State's farm to school program.

SECTION 2. Chapter 141, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

“§141- Hawaii farm to school program; farm to school coordinator.
 (a) There is established within the department of agriculture a Hawaii farm to school program. The purpose of the farm to school program shall be to:

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- (1) Improve student health;
- (2) Develop an educated agricultural workforce;
- (3) Enrich the local food system through the support and increase of local food procurement for the State's public schools and other institutions;
- (4) Accelerate garden and farm-based education for the State's public school students; and
- (5) Expand the relationships between public schools and agricultural communities.

(b) The Hawaii farm to school program shall be headed by a farm to school coordinator who shall work in collaboration with the appropriate stakeholders to address the issues of supply, demand, procurement, and consumption of Hawaii-grown foods in state facilities, primarily education facilities, and take reasonable steps to incorporate more agriculture and nutrition education in schools.”

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the agricultural development and food security special fund the sum of \$75,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) farm to school coordinator position in the department of agriculture.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2015.

(Approved July 7, 2015.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.