

March 6, 2013

Dear House Finance Committee

Please continue to support Farm to School by **granting the fourth year of spending for this invaluable program**. This program gets thousands of pounds of local foods into the schools, builds relationships between children and the natural resources around them, helps create and sustain local economies, develops jobs so that people can continue to support themselves in their communities, and helps Alaska participate in America's food movement to make food healthy for those that eat it, sustainable since transportation/fuel usage is minimal, and enjoyable. Here in Sitka, the Farm to School program has supported the community's Fish to School program by giving us mini grants for our projects, which have enabled us to offer 1,500 students local seafood! These programs are invaluable for our youth, community, health, and economy.

Thank you for your time,

Ray Friedlander

109 Jeff Davis St., Sitka, AK 99835

CC'ed:

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

Dear House Finance Committee,

As a Southeast Alaska fisherman and parent of a young child enrolled in an Alaskan public school,

I am writing to voice my strong support for the Farm to School Program and its continued funding.

For the last three years, my community's schoolchildren have benefited from healthy Local Fish Lunches—an award-winning Farm to School offshoot—served through the Sitka School District's

school lunch program. These lunches bring donations of locally-caught seafood from fishermen like

myself to children who otherwise might not have the chance to benefit firsthand from one of Alaska's

most valuable natural resources.

Sitka is a model for communities statewide who wish to make local foods available in other school lunch programs—and rightly so, as the benefits to our state's children are many:

- Access to healthy foods, regardless of family income level
- Access to foods produced right here in Alaska
- Awareness of our state's natural resources and the importance of good stewardship
- Pride in Alaska's unique way of life and, in turn, an impetus toward good citizenship
- Future job opportunities in the emerging local foods sector
- Greater food security that comes with decreased dependence on imported foods

Just as I believe our state's schoolchildren should be among the first to enjoy locally-harvested seafood,

I also believe Alaskan children should have access to locally-grown produce—the plethora of fruits and vegetables that thrive in our rich soils. Please ensure this happens throughout our state by voting for continued funding for the Farm to School Program.

Thank you for your service to our great state, and for your time.

Sincerely,

Beth Short-Rhoads  
111 Jamestown Drive  
Sitka, AK 99835  
907-738-9942



Sitka Conservation Society  
Box 6533  
Sitka, Alaska 99835  
(907) 747-7509  
info@sitkawild.org  
www.sitkawild.org

*"Protecting the natural environment of  
the Tongass while supporting the  
development of sustainable  
communities in Southeast Alaska – since  
1967."*

Dear House Finance Committee,

The Alaska State Farm to School Program has been a huge asset to the Fish to Schools program in Sitka. Fish to Schools works toward a sustainable community that offers all school children the health benefits of locally-caught seafood, equips them to understand how this food source is obtained, and empowers them to one day enjoy the full cultural and economic advantages of local seafood resources. Farm to School has been integral to our success—through connections, support, and grant funding we have received. Through a partnership with Farm to School we are now able to offer 1,500 students in our community local fish twice a month!

The benefits to of Farm to School are many. By funding Farm to School, we can ensure schools connect with local, regional, and state farmers and fishermen. Farm to School networks create in-state markets for our producers, bolstering our local production and economies. And students benefit by eating local, healthy foods full of nutrients that feed their growing brains.

Farm to school benefits our economies, our communities, and our students. Thousands of pounds of fresh produce and seafood are now offered to Alaskan students, a direct result of this state program. Please reinstate funding for Alaska's Farm to School program so we can continue to see local seafood, Alaskan Grown, and traditional foods served in our schools.

Sincerely,

Tracy Gagnon  
Fish to Schools Coordinator  
Sitka Conservation Society

3-6-13

3/6/2013

Dear House Finance Committee,

As you conduct your research into budget items worthy of funding this legislative session, I hope you will give due consideration to the Farm to Schools program. I have seen more children in my school eating school lunch on the days local fish is offered, and as their teacher, I feel good about what they're eating. This program is just the smallest seed, but it is effective and making good things happen in our schools.

Please feel welcome to contact me in Sitka with any questions regarding the benefits of Farm to School funding for the students here – it is a small program that packs a punch and I hope you will support it in the budget process.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Himschoot  
(907) 738 6744

3/6/2013

Dear House Finance committee;

As a commercial Fisher in Sitka, and the mother of a Keet Gooshi Heen elementary school student, I very much hope that you will consider reinstating the fourth year of funding for the Farm to Schools program.

With the rising cost of groceries here in Alaska, and the rising cost of shipping Alaska's products South, it is very important that we do the best we can to keep as much of Alaska's local produce and seafood here in the state. As a commercial fisher, I see my shipping costs rise substantially every year. This eats into my bottom line and makes it harder for me to remain a successful local business. By far the best returns I see are from products I sell locally. That extra money I make from saved shipping costs stays in Alaska and benefits the local economy. By "buying local", The Farm to School Program supports local fishermen, processors and farmers here in Alaska.

As a parent of a school aged child, I am very concerned about the quality of food served in school lunches. I am certain that the local fish students are now eating through our Fish to Schools program, in partnership with Farm to School, has higher dietary benefits than the normal fare. Fish caught here in Sitka Sound, processed at our local seafood processors, and cooked here at school happens in just a five mile radius and that's pretty fantastic!

I love the fact that when my child eats lunch on a "Fish to School" lunch day, she is aware of the fact that her dad, or one of his fishermen friends probably caught the fish she's eating. I believe this makes her more in tune with both the food she chooses to put in her body, AND with her community. If our younger generation realizes that their community is making the effort to invest in their healthy future, they will grow up to value their community and give back. "Sense of Place" is a very real thing, and the Farm to School Program is teaching a whole new generation where their food comes from, and why they need to support the community that provides it.

In closing, please reinstate funding for the Farm to School program.

Thank you,

Wendy Alderson  
F/V Ocean Cape

Another letter!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Elizabeth Short-Rhoads** <[elianise@yahoo.com](mailto:elianise@yahoo.com)>

Date: Wed, Mar 6, 2013 at 11:39 AM

Subject: Please support the Farm to School Program

To: "[Representative Bill Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Bill_Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us)"

<[Representative Bill Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Bill_Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us)>

Cc: "[peter\\_ecklund@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:peter_ecklund@legis.state.ak.us)" <[peter\\_ecklund@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:peter_ecklund@legis.state.ak.us)>,

"[joe\\_michel@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:joe_michel@legis.state.ak.us)" <[joe\\_michel@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:joe_michel@legis.state.ak.us)>, "[joe.michel@akleg.gov](mailto:joe.michel@akleg.gov)"

<[joe.michel@akleg.gov](mailto:joe.michel@akleg.gov)>, "[daniel.george@akleg.gov](mailto:daniel.george@akleg.gov)" <[daniel.george@akleg.gov](mailto:daniel.george@akleg.gov)>,

"[darrell.breese@akleg.gov](mailto:darrell.breese@akleg.gov)" <[darrell.breese@akleg.gov](mailto:darrell.breese@akleg.gov)>, "[ryan.mckee@akleg.gov](mailto:ryan.mckee@akleg.gov)"

<[ryan.mckee@akleg.gov](mailto:ryan.mckee@akleg.gov)>, "[Representative.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov)"

<[Representative.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov)>

Dear Senator Stoltze,

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Thank you for your service to our great state, and for your time.

Sincerely,

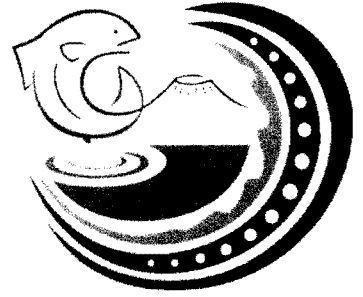
Beth Short-Rhoads  
111 Jamestown Drive  
Sitka, AK 99835  
907-738-9942

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Tracy Gagnon  
Community Sustainability Organizer  
Sitka Conservation Society  
(907) 747-7509  
[tracy@sitkawild.org](mailto:tracy@sitkawild.org)

# SITKA SOUND SCIENCE CENTER

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Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Admin Phone: 907.747.8878  
Email: [info@sitkasoundsciencecenter.org](mailto:info@sitkasoundsciencecenter.org)



March 5, 2013

Dear Legislators,

**This is a letter in support of the Fisheries Seafood and Maritime Initiative that includes an expansion of the University of Alaska Fisheries Technology Program.** The expansion is critical to strengthening a program that is already helping Alaska by training people in aquaculture and fisheries biology.

The Sitka Sound Science Center is a support facility for the Fish Tech program and we see first-hand how this job training program helps Alaskans land jobs in fisheries and aquaculture.

The Fisheries Technology Program offers classes that are based on the needs of the aquaculture industry. This expansion will benefit students living in small communities in coastal Alaska.

Your support of this Initiative is critical to strengthening commercial fisheries in Alaska

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Busch", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Lisa Busch, Executive Director