



Alaska Food Policy Council

PO BOX 173

Homer, AK 99603

907-756-3930

director@alaskafoodpolicycouncil.org

www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org

February 17, 2025

Dear Representatives Dibert, Burke, Edgmon, and Galvin,

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Food Policy Council to express our strong support and appreciation for House Bill 12 - Free Breakfast & Lunch in Public Schools.

The National School Lunch Program, established under the 1946 Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, was created to protect children's health and well-being while also supporting the domestic agricultural market (42 U.S.C. 1751 Sec 2)¹. Recognizing the program's role in national security and economic growth, a partnership between the federal government and the state of Alaska to provide universal school meals will benefit both Alaska's children and our growing agricultural industry.

We know that one in six children in Alaska are food insecure², and that too often school is the one place where they can be assured a full meal. While we share the ultimate vision that all Alaskans are food secure with healthy and nutritious food at home, that is unfortunately not our current reality. Both research and personal experience tell us that kids perform better, behave better, and are more successful when their bellies are full³. By ensuring that school meals are available to all, the state of Alaska has a critical opportunity with the leadership shown in HB 12 to improve school outcomes and success for our children. Importantly, we will also have increased market opportunities for our agricultural producers.

Thank you for supporting HB 12. We look forward to supporting its passage to strengthen our food systems and support kids across Alaska.

Sincerely,

Rachel Lord, Advocacy & Policy Director

¹ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-10333/pdf/COMPS-10333.pdf>

² <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2022/child/alaska>

³ <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SchoolMealsForAll.pdf>