

**Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801**

Re: Support for CSHB217 – Alaska Food Freedom Act

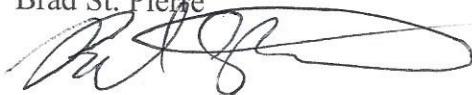
Dear Legislators,

The Tanana Valley Farmers Market Association, the largest and longest continuously operating all Alaska Grown and Alaska Made market in the state. And the Alaska Farmers Market Association, representing over forty farmers markets around the state. Strongly support the passage of CSHB217- Alaska Food Freedom Act. This bill will encourage growth in our local economy's, through encouraging direct to consumer sales of Alaska grown and Alaska made products to Alaskans. Through giving support to the Alaska Grown program, and change to state procurement rules, and clarifying farmers markets definition, with this bill the state of Alaska continues its legacy supporting the agriculture and cottage food industries in our great state, availing more local healthy food produced by Alaskans for Alaskans.

This bill will positively affect the health of Alaska's, children, elderly and disadvantaged. At the over forty markets around the state, the farmers market WIC coupon program, supports mothers with young children to eat fresh local vegetables, just like the senior farmers market coupon program facilitates seniors to do the same. With the expanded participation by farmers markets in the QUEST program, Alaskans on food stamps will now have more access the freshest healthiest food Alaska has to offer.

Along with this bills health benefits through support for markets participating in these programs, the economic benefit to farmers and cottage food producers is immeasurable. By solidifying the states regulations and preferences, producers will have the opportunity to expand their markets and have better resources available for marketing those products to Alaskans. Please support your local Alaska family's, farmers and cottage food producers by passing CSHB217.

Brad St. Pierre



Tanana Valley Farmers Market, General Manager

Alaska Farmers Market Association, Vice President

Goosefoot Farm, Owner