



Department of Health

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TTY: 711
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May 23, 2024

Susan R. Donovan, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H 8280 – A Joint Resolution Creating a Special Joint Legislative Commission to Study, Provide Recommendations, and Oversee Implementation of Requirements for State Departments and Vendors to Adopt Good Food Purchasing Standards in the State of Rhode Island.

Dear Chair Donovan,

Please accept this letter regarding H8280 legislation which would establish a commission to study and provide recommendations to implement key tenets of the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) across State agencies. [GFPP promotes](#) values-based institutional procurement, including six focus areas: supporting local economies, a valued workforce, community nutrition, animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and equity.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued procurement guidance directing practitioners to the [Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities](#). The guidelines include standards related to nutrition, behavioral design, facility efficiency, food safety, and compliance. As recipients of the highly competitive CDC State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) grant, the Rhode Island Department of Health's Healthy Eating, Active Living Program (HEAL) is required to leverage State agency partnerships (e.g., Department of Corrections; Department of Environmental Management's Division of Parks; the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals) to support updates to Food Service Guidelines.

Under SPAN, the State Nutrition Coordinator is conducting a landscape assessment to better understand State agency purchasing practice. The research process has revealed multiple barriers to increase nutrient-dense and local options across State agencies. However, the research has also underscored the importance of values-based purchasing as a vehicle to promote equity across the food system. Although not required, the CDC has further encouraged recipients to consider values-based purchasing in their workplan and activities. Moreover, as a program established to



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support health equity in the Rhode Island food system, GFPP aligns with the [HEAL Strategic Plan](#).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,



Jerome Larkin, MD
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy



State of Rhode Island