

Thank you City Council members for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Ann Karlen. I am here today on behalf of the Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC) to discuss the critical need to integrate food into any green procurement initiative or policy.

FPAC was convened in 2011 to facilitate the development of responsible policies that improve access to “good food” for all Philadelphians. It currently has 30 appointed members representing different sectors of the food system and also includes ex-officio members from City government. Members of FPAC’s Good Food Procurement subcommittee represent diverse areas of the food system, and are affiliated with organizations such as Common Market, The Enterprise Center, Fair Food, The Food Trust, the Office of Sustainability, Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Restaurant Opportunities Center, and Sustainable Business Network.

We are a city surrounded by farms, rich with community gardens and home to a renowned wholesale produce terminal, yet we have some of the highest rates of heart disease, diabetes, unemployment, and poverty. The Good Food Procurement subcommittee of FPAC formed in 2013 in the recognition that procurement is a powerful tool for change and make important connections between supply and demand in the marketplace. The City has the ability to lead by example and leverage its buying power to support responsible environmental practices and build up the Good Food marketplace. Los Angeles, Cleveland, New York, Massachusetts, and Washington State, among others, have adopted good food procurement policies and gained national attention for their work. We urge Philadelphia to show similar leadership by embedding good food into this sustainable procurement conversation.

So what is good food? FPAC understands “good food” as being:

- **Healthy**, with emphasis on fresh fruit and vegetable options and whole grains, and limited sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.
- **Sustainable**, supporting small- and mid-sized agricultural and food processing operations; sourcing from producers that employ production systems that reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers; avoiding the use of hormones, antibiotics, and GMOs; conserving soil and water; protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat and biodiversity; and reducing on-farm energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Fair**, providing safe and healthy working conditions and fair compensation for all food chain workers, from production to consumption.
- **Local**, exhibiting a commitment to spurring economic development in the Philadelphia region through local business ownership and employment.

Good Food Procurement makes sense, given the Administration and Council’s commitment to economic and workforce development, improved public health, protection of natural resources, local investment, and preparation for a hotter, wetter future. It builds upon the existing commitment to citywide nutrition standards managed by the Health Department with an interdepartmental team.

The FPAC procurement subcommittee has worked hard to identify the City’s current food purchasing and understand the (often complicated) procurement and contracting process. We have

conducted outreach to local businesses and departments to identify barriers and solutions to increase the purchase of good food.

We estimate that the City of Philadelphia spends \$17 million annually for food programs serving seniors, youth, and vulnerable populations in places like summer and afterschool programs, shelters, and prisons. Departments also spend an additional \$100,000 for food for meetings and events. By shifting even a small portion of these purchases to good food, the City can start to see the benefits of improved health, economic opportunity, and environmental stewardship.

At the same time, there are barriers for both departments buying food and businesses that want to take advantage of contracting opportunities that this policy could address. For departments, barriers include limited budgets, limited number of respondents to contracting opportunities, and restricted timelines for locking in food projections and costs. For businesses, there is uncertainty about when and how to identify contracting opportunities and small individual volumes per department. Deliberately reviewing the City's contracting patterns and models, while still ensuring competitive and fair procurement processes, might allow for higher quality good food to make its way into City foodservice.

FPAC recommends the following good food procurement policy options be considered as part of green procurement conversations:

- **Signal and increase demand by increasing City purchases of good food.**
- **Build supply in the region by engaging and supporting existing and new good food businesses.**
- **Encourage innovative practices such as purchasing from cooperative contracts and prioritizing seasonally-responsive sourcing.**

We think these and other sustainable procurement policies should be addressed through the creation of a cross-sectoral task force that would include a representative that could speak to the critical need to integrate good food in procurement policy.

We thank Council again for the opportunity to testify today.

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