

The Honorable Vincent Hughes  
Minority Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120



## PHILADELPHIA FOOD POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dear Senator Hughes:

The Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC) connects Philadelphians and their local government to create a more just food system. FPAC envisions that all Philadelphians can access and afford healthy, sustainable, culturally appropriate, local, and fair food.

As you know, large areas of Philadelphia have few supermarkets, and in many neighborhoods none exist. In fact, Philadelphia has the second lowest number of supermarkets per capita of major cities in the nation. This shortage of supermarkets means that low-income residents must travel outside of their neighborhoods to purchase food, or shop at more expensive corner and convenience stores with limited selection and often poor quality food. Insufficient access to affordable and nutritious food in lower-income neighborhoods adds to the total cost of food for neighborhood residents. Nutritionally inadequate diets may exacerbate long-term health problems for low-income Philadelphia residents who suffer from diet-related health problems such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, at rates significantly higher than those of the general population.

The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI) was launched in 2004 by the Commonwealth to create jobs and improve health by bringing more grocery stores to underserved urban and rural areas. The program, launched as a public private partnership between the Commonwealth, The Food Trust, Reinvestment Fund, and grocery store operators, has been a huge success and has created a national model that has been replicated in other states across the country.

The Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative funded 88 food retail projects and created over 5,000 jobs in urban and rural communities from 2004 to 2010, and helped more than 400,000 Pennsylvanians gain access to healthy food. While an incredible amount of progress has been made, recent studies show that more than 500,000 children in Pennsylvania still live in areas where it is difficult to access healthy food.

Renewed funding for the program could generate impacts comparable to those achieved from 2004 to 2010. Now is the time to re-invest in this proven program to create jobs and improve health in the Commonwealth.

FPAC strongly supports including an appropriation of \$5 million in the FY 2017-18 State budget to fund the re-capitalization of FFFI to ensure that Pennsylvania remains at the forefront of improving access to nutritious food.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kelly Courts in black ink.

Kelly Courts  
Food & Health Co-Chair

Handwritten signature of Esteban Kelly in black ink.

Esteban Kelly  
FPAC Appointed Co-Chair

Handwritten signature of Dwayne Wharton in black ink.

Dwayne Wharton  
Food & Health Co-Chair