

Thank you so much for your service to the State of Colorado. My name is Rachel Landis and I work for the Good Food Collective based in Durango, Colorado. The Good Food Collective is part of a broader Coalition of groups and individuals in Southwest Colorado who have been working to support the development and passage of [HB25-1274, Healthy School Meals for All](#). This bill is of critical importance to the well-being of our families, the development of our youth, and also the livelihood of our region's farmers. **At the recent Durango 9R Resource Fair, children and families wrote postcards to you sharing their thoughts on the importance of nutritious, universally available school meals. I am attaching them for your reading pleasure -- they will both melt and break your heart**

I cannot understate how excited our regional farmers were after the passage of the first round of HSMA -- at last, their dream to get to have steady, reliable accounts not reliant on grant funding where their food actually fed their friends and neighbors (and not just the elite); and how excited our families were and continue to be at the prospect of their children receiving access to school meals while reducing the cost burden food places on already tight household budgets. I also cannot understate how devastated farmers, ranchers, school dining staff, and families were to learn that the dream they had believed they were voting to support through Ballot Measure FF would not become a reality in its entirety.

HB25-1274 holds within it the opportunity to continue to lend a hand to struggling families and also uplift our agriculture sector. Without it, things don't remain in our current status quo. Instead, over 30% of our schools' youth will lose access to universal school meals on January 1, 2026. With it, all children will retain their access to universal school meals. With it, we have the opportunity to restore the precious and stable market originally committed to Colorado farmers and ranchers, while also increasing the nutritional content that those universal meals are providing.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.
Be Well,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Landis", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rachel Landis

Durango
City Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

As a parent and a
teacher I see meals
we receive. They are
not healthy portions.
My middle schooler
says they don't taste
In solidarity, good.
En solidaridad,
Mrs. Somerville



To / Para :

hun



Durango Colorado
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

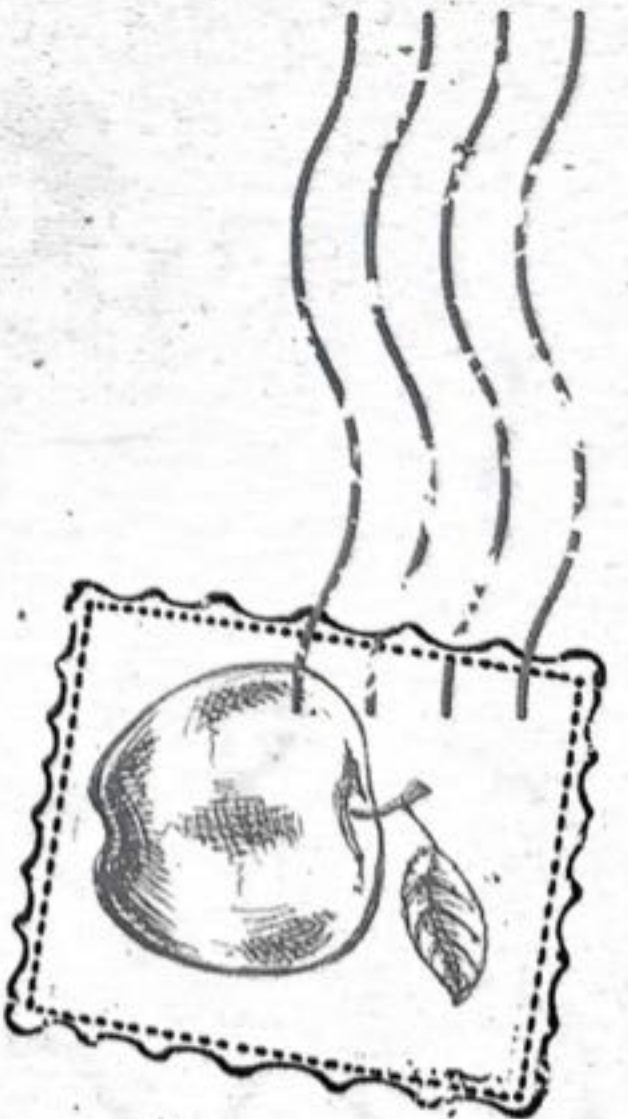
I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

Es importante para mí porque
hay veces que mis papas no
tienen dinero y así puedo
comer evitando pedir dinero
y sin morir de hambre
durante el horario escolar.

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

Yolaf.



To / Para:

nuestro representante country

Colorado
City / Ciudad

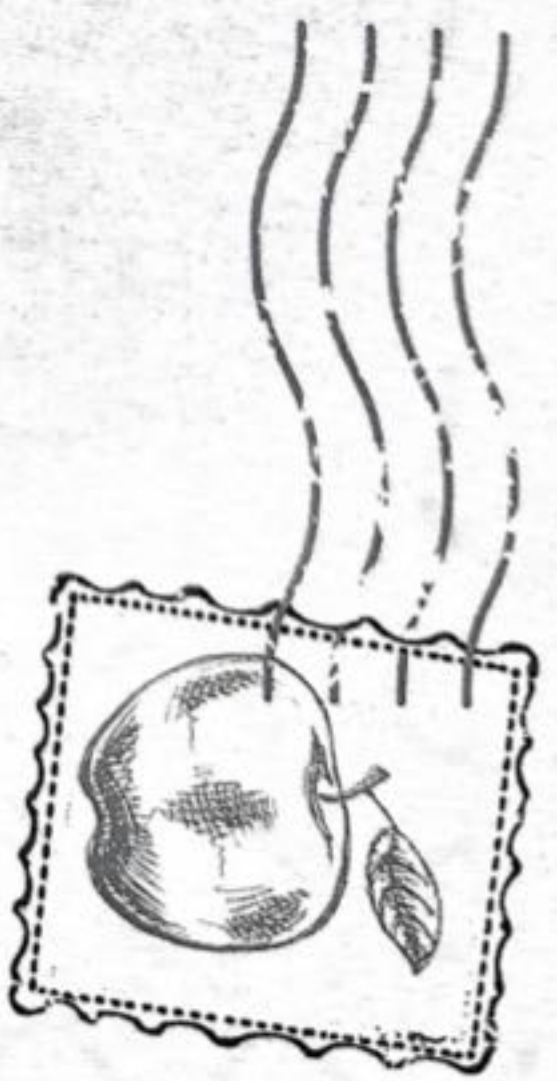
Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals
for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa
Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es
importante para mí porque:

Hay personas que lo
necesitan ya que puede
que no tengan muchas
recursos y esto nos
apoyaría demasrado.

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,



To / Para :

La Plata county legislator

Colorado
City / Ciudad

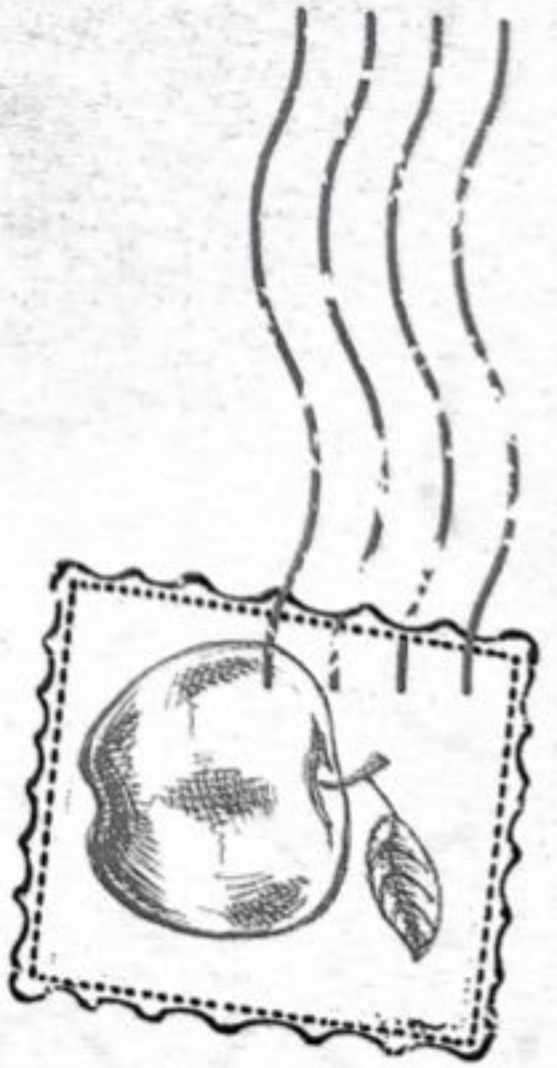
Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

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Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es
importante para mí porque:

Hay personas que lo
necesitan ya que puede
que no tengan muchas
recursos y esto nos
apoyaría demasrado.

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,



To / Para :

La Plata county legislator

Durango
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

We need healthy food

at our schools because

what if there is a

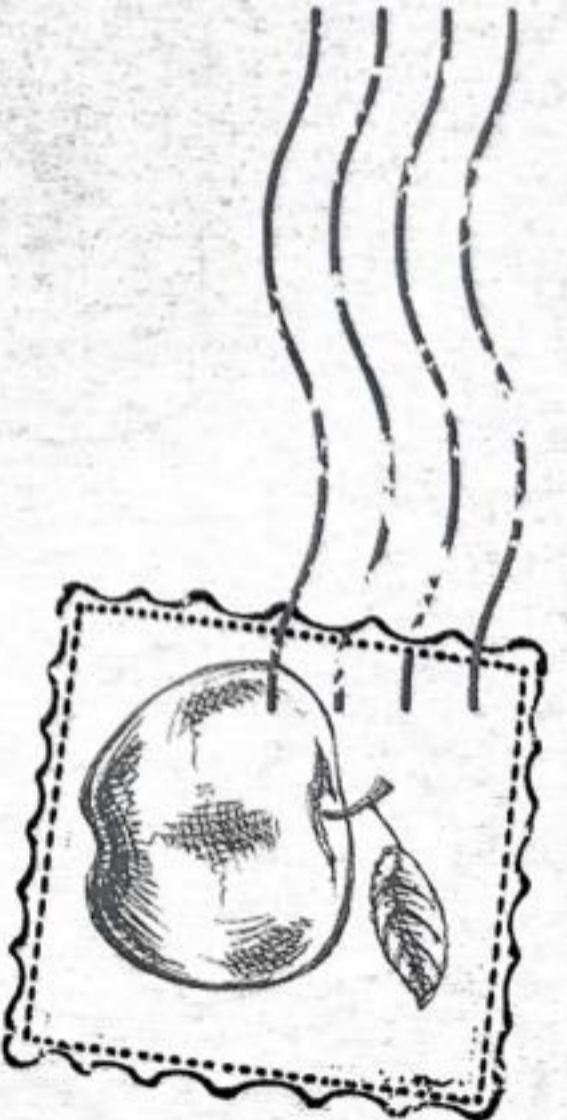
Poor kid that only

eats school lunch but

he/she is Vegetarian

he/she needs to eat too
in solidarity, like everybody us,
En solidaridad,

Michèle Belman



To / Para :

Durango Co.
City / Ciudad

**Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,**

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

My daughter (Adriana)
loves her free

School lunches,

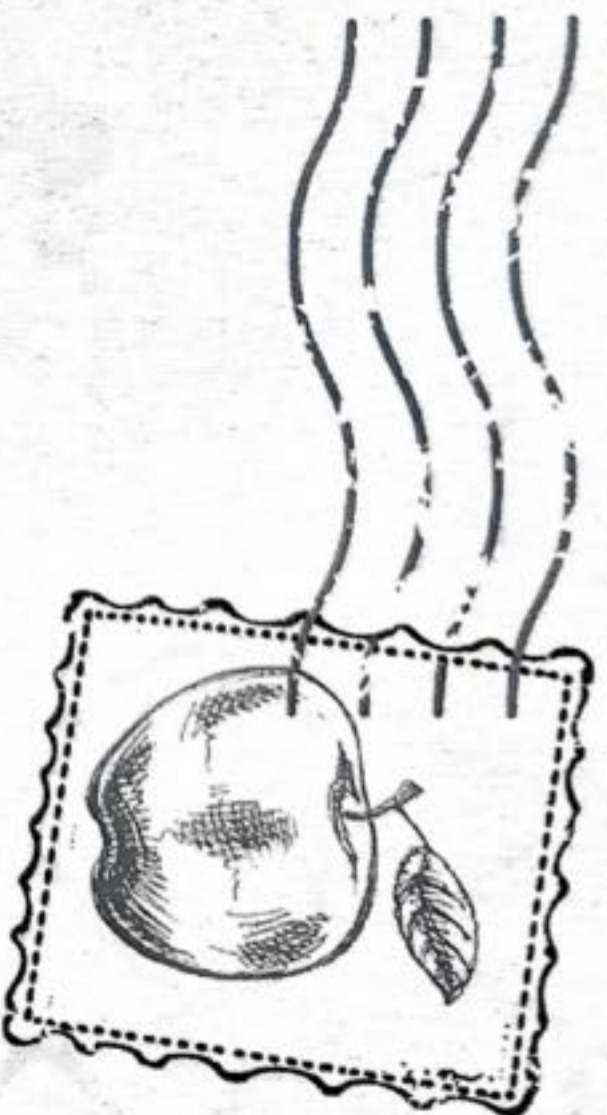
It is unable to

work & so thankful

for the help!

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,
Please continue
Funding

Cherish Barton



To / Para :

hungerfreecolorado.org

Durango
City / Ciudad

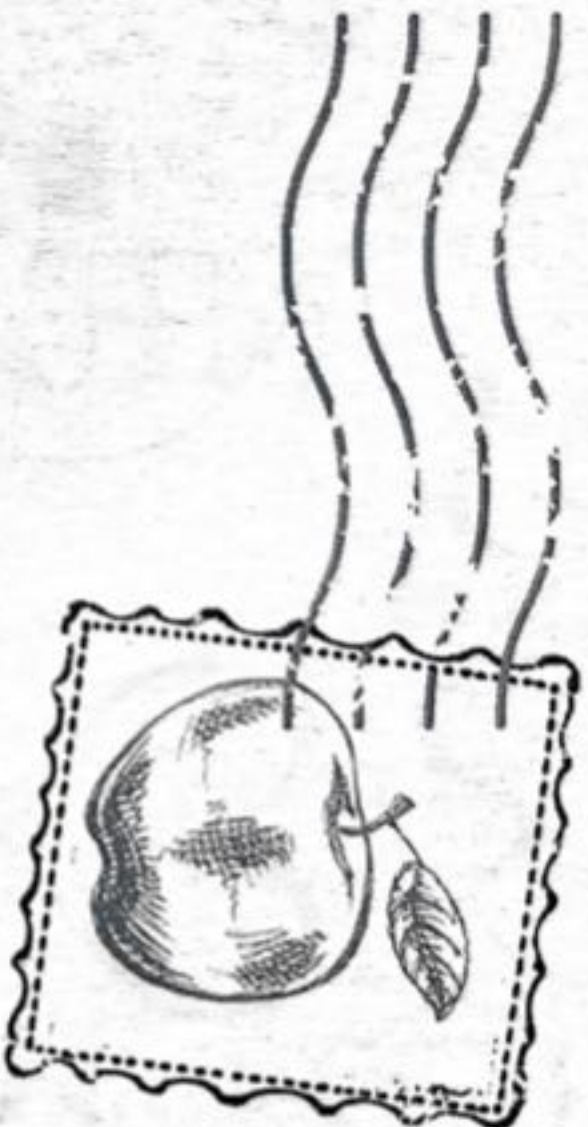
**Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,**

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

I'm a single mom of 3
with no income. Please
continue to do free lunch!

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,



To / Para :

hungerfreecolorado.org

City / Ciudad

**Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,**

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals
for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa
Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es
importante para mí porque:

la comida escolar es

una forma de ayudar con

el hambre. Todas los niños

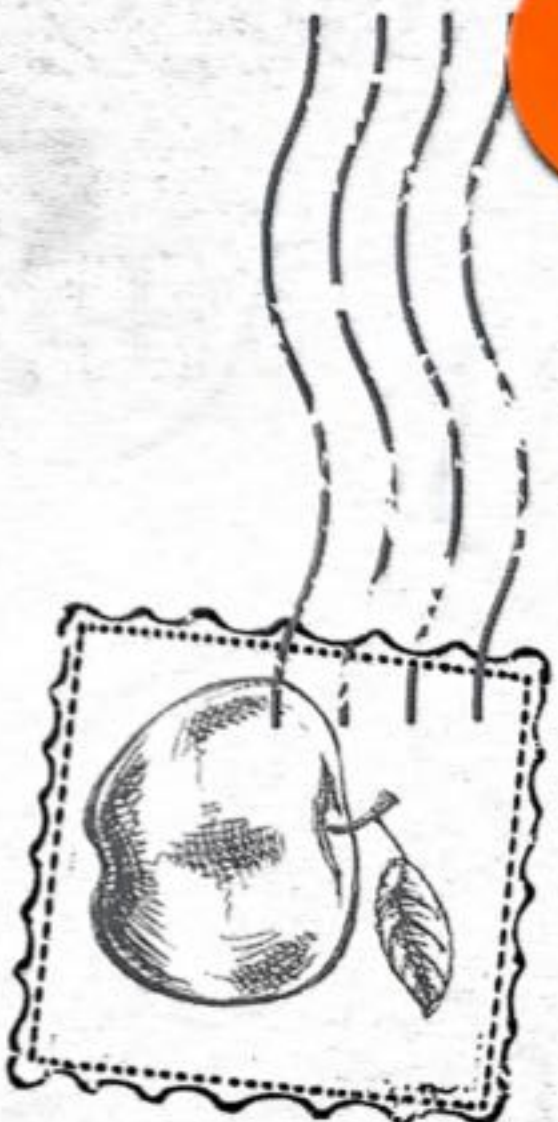
deberían ir a la escuela y

tener el estomago lleno.

In solidarity,

En solidaridad,

Caroline Diaz



To / Para :

Durango
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

Because they
are good for you
and help you to
have energy to
play outside.
I love the pasta

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

Arca



To / Para :

Denver Co.
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

It's here healthy

meals makes a huge

difference in the lives

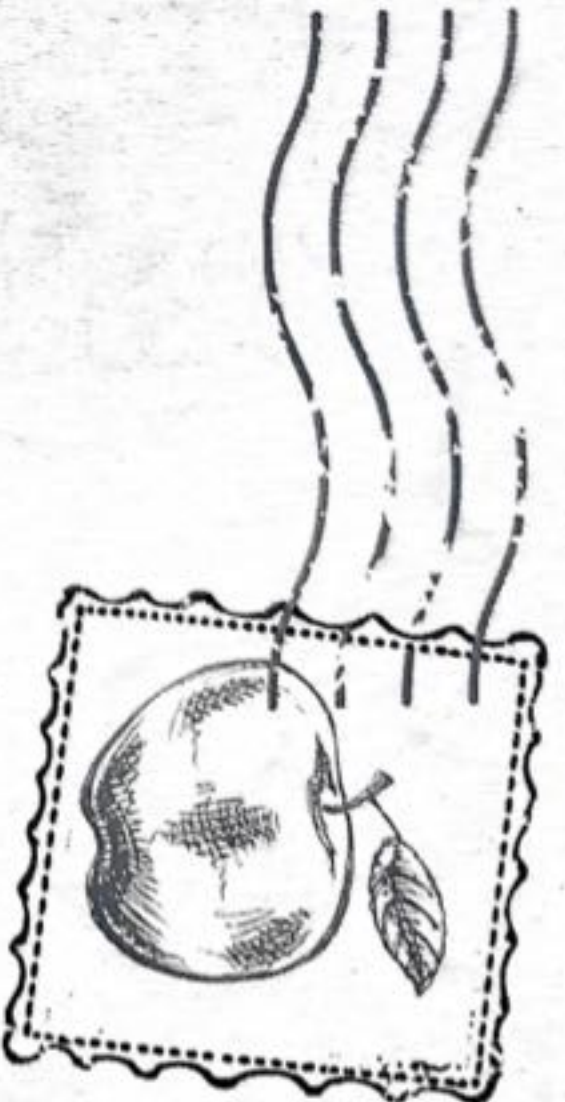
of children. They are

able to learn healthy

eating

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

J. Burgin



To / Para :

DuVanso
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

we need healthy school

meals so we have

energy. If we eat

to much sugar kids

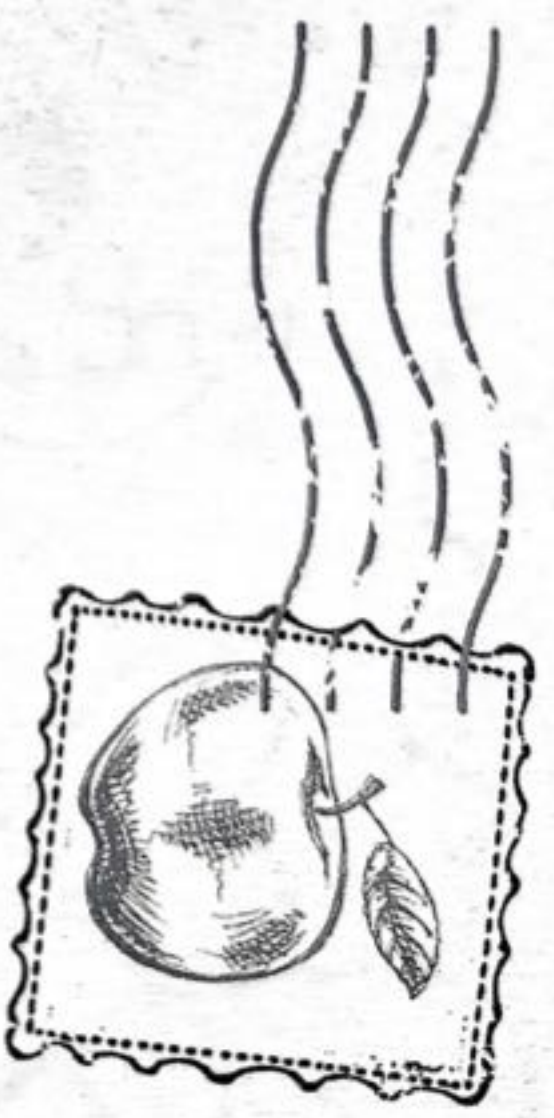
may have a sugar

rush. So it's better,

safety and healthier for us.
In solidarity,

En solidaridad,

Abrii Belmsn



To / Para :

Durango Co
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

it is important to me that

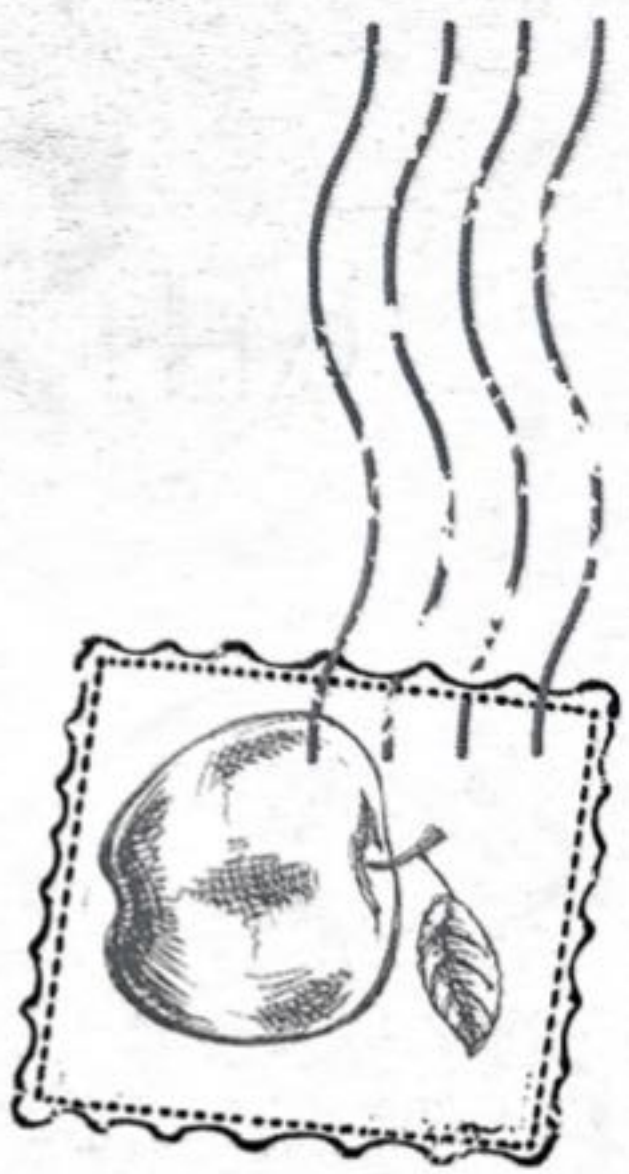
our community has a healthy

and nutritious food options

available.

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

Evelyn



To / Para :

Durango
city / ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals
for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa
Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es
importante para mí porque:

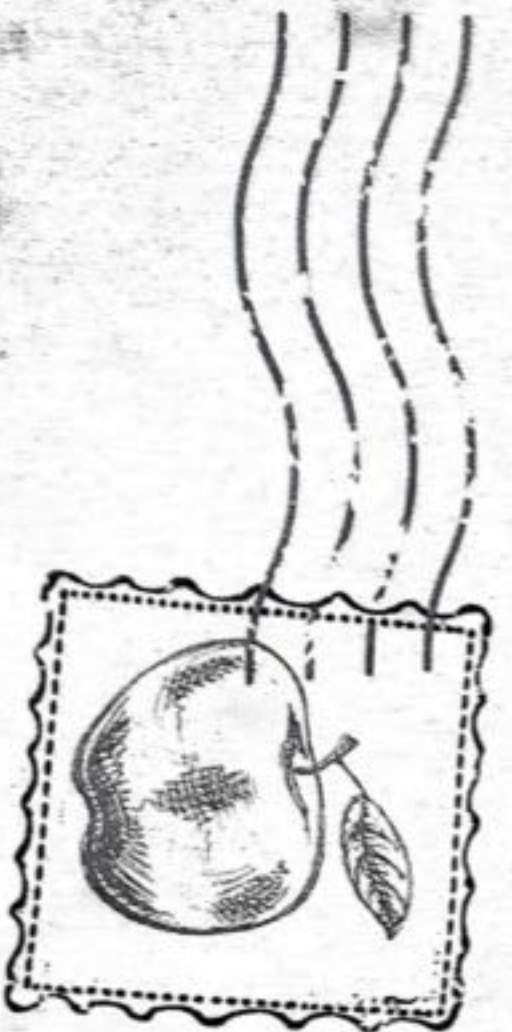
So that you don't

die

I love my schools

mac + cheese

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,
Aveleen



To / Para:

hungerfreecolorado.org

Durango
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

Por que es para el bien
de los Cuadernito y que
ellos son el futuro de
este pais y se merecen
lo mejor

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,



To / Para :

Durango
City/Ciudad

**Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,**

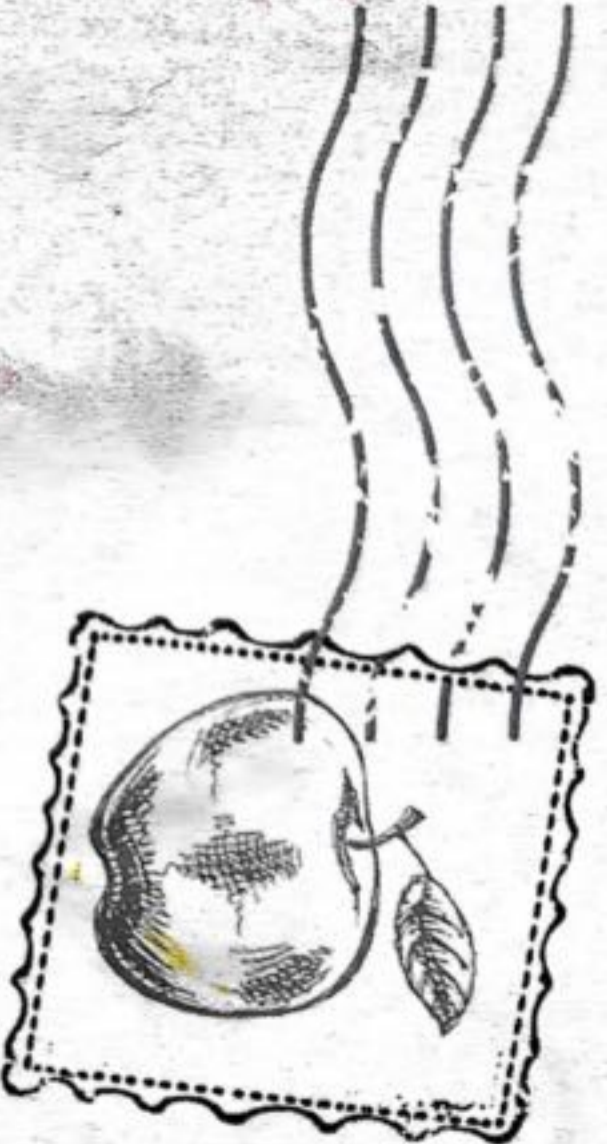
I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

la comida estan
rica.

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

Dr. Hill



To / Para

hungerfreecolorado.org

Durango
city / ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

Its because I
want to make
sure I am a
strong girl when
I grow up.

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

Andy



To / Para :

Durango
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

healthy meals are
important to me
so that I have
energy for gymnastics

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

Evah



To / Para :



Durango CO
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

I think healthy food
is important so
I can play soccer
~~and~~

In solidarity,
En solidaridad, Astrid

To / Para :

hungerfreecolorado.org



Durango
City / Ciudad

**Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,**

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es importante para mí porque:

So I won't get
sick.

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

KIPRA

To / Para :

hungerfreecolorado.org



Durango
City / Ciudad

Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,

Write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals
or All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa
Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es
importante para mí porque:

I think free

school lunches

are important

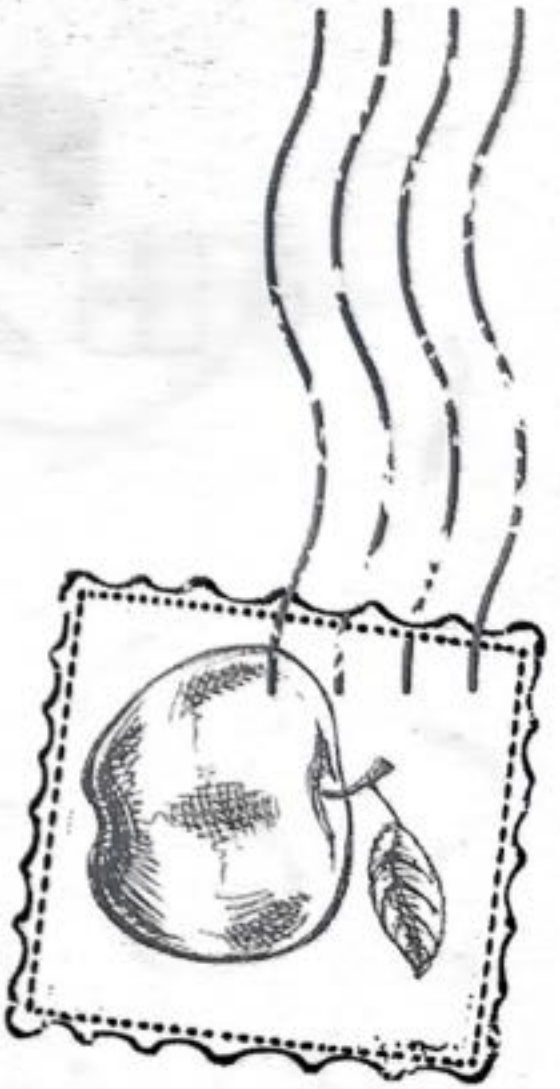
because some

people don't

have the money

to buy it for lunch

for my children. I am a parent in
Durango, Colorado. For more information, visit
www.hungryforchange.org



To / Para :

Durango
City / Ciudad

**Dear Legislator,
Estimado Legislador,**

I write to urge you to support the Healthy School Meals
for All program. This is important to me because:

Le escribo para pedirle que apoye el programa
Comidas escolares saludables para todos. Esto es
importante para mí porque:

es importante

para mí porque me

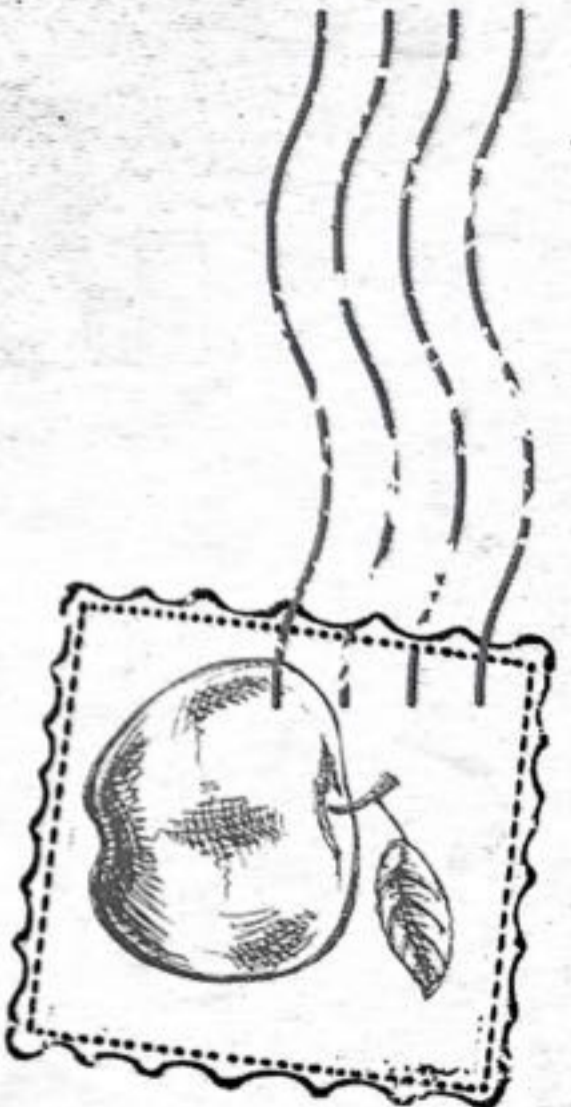
dan comidas saludables y

gratis y a apoyar la

economía de mi familia

In solidarity,
En solidaridad,

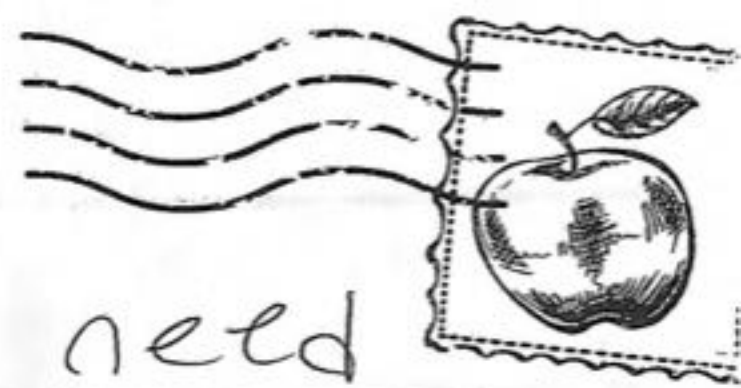
Verónica
Neetham



To / Para :

Legislador

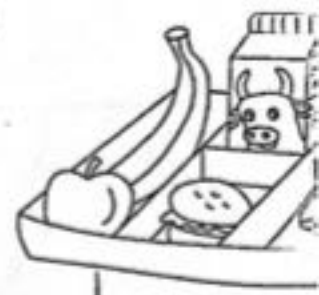
hungerfreecolorado.org



Dear park school we need
free lunch because some
of us dont have lunch boxes
forget to pack them
~~also, please change the~~



HUN
FREE CO



In solidarity, zoey c.

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Stephanie Beltran | Young Invincibles

Re: HB25-1275: Healthy School Meals for All

Madam Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you. My name is Stephanie Beltran, and I am here today representing myself, and I am a Young Advocate with Young Invincibles.

I was born and raised in Pueblo, Colorado, and I am currently a Senior at Pueblo West High School. I plan to attend CSU Pueblo to complete my prerequisites on the path to becoming a veterinarian. In addition to this, I am deeply passionate about supporting families by finding ways to help alleviate the strain of financial burdens through improved access to programs and services.

Growing up, many of my classmates and friends struggled to afford food. I saw how they would lose focus in class, have less energy, and even have lower self-esteem. Some days, they wouldn't eat at all. It was sad to see my friends going hungry.

A specific time that I can remember is when a friend of mine didn't come to school for a week. I asked why she didn't, and she told me it was because her family was facing housing issues, her mom had lost her job, and they were barely making ends meet. I asked if she could come to school to eat lunch because, at the time, I didn't have a class with her, and we would always eat together. She said she was not able to buy food because her family could not afford to pay for it. The next day, I brought an extra peanut butter and jelly sandwich that my mom had made for her. It was a small gesture, but I know it meant a lot to her. Since her dad was the only one working, she was only able to have dinner when she got home from school, which was simply not enough nutrition for a growing kid. She came to school for the next few weeks, but then one day didn't come at all. I still think about this moment, and I still think about her; I hope she and her family are doing okay.

For myself, having a full meal for lunch and breakfast has helped me focus better in class. I've noticed that when I don't have enough to eat or anything at all, I tend to feel more sluggish and lazy. It becomes increasingly difficult to concentrate or stay engaged, especially during lengthy lectures or assignments. Eating balanced meals gives my body the fuel it needs to stay motivated and productive. It's a small habit, but it's made a big difference in both my academic performance and overall mood throughout the day. That's why this bill is so crucial for students.

No child deserves to be hungry, and no family should struggle to put food on the table. Healthy School Meals for All saves Colorado families up to \$1,300 per child per year, and most families I know have three or more kids; that's nearly \$4,000! For families already struggling with basic needs, that money can take a weight off their shoulders. Additionally, the program helps schools prepare meals from scratch, using fresher and healthier ingredients. This ensures that all students receive nutritious, well-balanced meals.

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Stephanie Beltran | Young Invincibles

Re: HB25-1275: Healthy School Meals for All

Programs like Healthy School Meals For All ensure that every student in Colorado has access to the nutrition they need to thrive both academically and personally. It's not just about providing food, it's about creating a strong and healthy future for all of us.

As a young Coloradan who has witnessed the impact of not being able to afford meals, I urge you to **vote yes on House Bill 25-1274**. Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Beltran

Young Advocate | Young Invincibles

Senate Finance

04/24/2025 Upon Adjournment

HB25-1274 Healthy School Meals for All Program

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Naomi Curland For Longmont Food Rescue	Longmont Food Rescue is committed to removing barriers to access and reducing stigma for people seeking food access and nutritional support. HB1274 ensures every student has access to nutritious meals at school, which supports student health and cognitive functioning. By making meals available to all, no student will be singled out because their family is struggling and every student will have access to the food they need. This bill addresses common barriers to students receiving adequate nutrition and opens up healthy food access to any student who may need it, eliminating the use of cumbersome paperwork and red tape for these students to receive vital healthy food. Before Healthy School Meals for All, managing applications was a burden for our school staff, but it also resulted in a lot of kids falling through the cracks of a complicated and flawed system. This bill supports children and families, the health and well-being of our future generations, while removing any stigma that may be associated with receiving free food services at school. I urge you to vote in favor of HB1274, for the benefit of all our youth.
Susana Polentino For themselves	Estoy de acuerdo con las comidas saludables para los niños de Colorado, ya que estuve trabajando en un distrito escolar y vi en primera fila la necesidad de muchos niños que llegan de sus casas sin desayuno y a la vez se van a sus casas con solo el almuerzo que les dan en la escuela. Es una situación alarmante ver la cantidad de niños que no cuentan con recursos alimenticios y que sus padres tampoco tienen responsabilidad en proveerlos. Los niños no tienen la culpa de la irresponsabilidad de los adultos, ellos merecen una alimentación de calidad y sí en este caso es el Estado por medio de las escuelas públicas quienes pueden brindarle a los niños esta valiosa oportunidad, así debería ser.
Thai Nguyen For Kaizen Food Rescue	Chair and Members of the Committee, My name is Thai Nguyen, and I am the founder and executive director of Kaizen Food Rescue, a grassroots, BIPOC-led organization based in Denver. Our mission is to advance food justice and health equity in communities historically excluded from access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food. On behalf of the thousands of children and families we serve each year — including refugees, immigrants, unhoused families, and frontline workers — we urge the Senate to pass House Bill 1274 and restore Healthy School Meals for All to the ballot. This bill is not only a policy; it is a promise. A promise that no child will have to learn

	<p>on an empty stomach, and no parent will have to choose between feeding their family and paying rent.</p> <p>At Kaizen, we see the daily impact of food insecurity. We distribute fresh produce and rescued food to over 400,000 families a year, many of whom rely on school meals to ensure their children get at least one nutritious meal a day. When these meals are not available — due to cost barriers or eligibility restrictions — children suffer. Their health declines, their focus in school drops, and the cycle of poverty deepens.</p> <p>Healthy School Meals for All is a crucial investment in our children’s futures. It lifts the stigma of free and reduced lunch, which many students silently bear. It removes the administrative burden of qualifying for meals and instead centers care, equity, and dignity.</p> <p>This legislation aligns with our belief that food is not a privilege — it is a human right. We stand with students, families, educators, and community partners across Colorado in asking the Senate to move HB1274 forward and give voters the opportunity to fully fund this essential program.</p> <p>Let us be bold. Let us be just. Let us ensure every child in Colorado is nourished — body, mind, and spirit.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Joy Jaeger For themselves</p>	<p>Hello Senators,</p> <p>I heartily thank you for your service to our State. I’m writing as someone who has worked with students and families in Colorado for over 15 years. I have seen what food scarcity has done here and I have also witnessed how students have responded to having free breakfast and lunch in our schools. I write to you today to express my strong support for HB25-1274, a critical program that will help secure the future of Colorado students and their academic achievement.</p> <p>This program has been so popular with students because free breakfast and lunch for everyone actively reduces stigma, meets nutritional needs, and eases the financial burden on family and school budgets. HSMA saves families up to \$1,300 per child per year! This has been such a huge help to our community. This voter-approved initiative has been transformative for students and families across our state. Please support Colorado's students by approving this initiative's funding.</p>

	<p>Fully funding the program would allow schools to invest in less processed, more nutritious meals using ingredients from local farmers and ranchers. Moreover, HSMA helps ensure that schools can operate their meal programs efficiently, maximizing federal resources and also enabling more commissary kitchens and bakeries that assist those schools without proper equipment or staff. With this funding, every school meal can be tasty, appealing, nutritious, locally sourced and culturally relevant to our beautifully diverse communities.</p> <p>Please consider placing HSMA on the ballot and honor our state’s commitment to democratic participation. I plead with you to continue elevating the voices of the people. Give Coloradans the opportunity to affirm that every child deserves the nourishment they need to learn, grow, thrive and be brilliant right here in our great state. I urge you to support HB25-1274 and stand with students and families across Colorado.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
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Chair and Members of the Committee,

At Nourish Colorado, we are committed to advancing policies that promote equitable access to healthy, local, and culturally relevant food while supporting farmers, ranchers, and food system workers.

We acknowledge and appreciate the bill's intent and several provisions that align with our mission.

Our key priority in this legislation is ensuring there is dedicated funding for the Local Food Program at pilot levels as included in Section 11, as well as statutory clarifications to the Local Food Program that can be implemented should there be a retain and/or a raise measure passed.

To provide a brief refresher on this program – The Local Food Program (LFP) pilot was created through HB19-1132, This bill created a multi-year program within the Colorado Department of Education to provide both: Direct cash incentives to schools to cover the costs of purchasing Colorado products; and, the necessary training and technical assistance for schools and growers to be able to work together in procurement and meal planning.

The pilot program was slated to sunset with the statewide implementation of LFP through the Healthy Schools Meals for All (HSMA) ballot measure. Unfortunately, there is no permanent or sustainable path forward for LFP without section 11 of this bill.

The Local Food Program pilot has been successful by many metrics, and now we have an opportunity to sustain and grow its impact through securing more robust funding through HB25-1274.

Here are some reasons why we support the Local Food Program:

- Since its inception, the program has directed close to \$2M dollars in school food purchases to Colorado's producers
- The \$500,000 spent annually on local foods by schools through this program equates to \$864,001 in local economic impact
- Last year, the program supported 32 school districts that served 10 million meals (63% being in rural areas)
- Last year, Colorado-grown, minimally processed products were purchased from over 49 Colorado producers
- Over 700 food service employees, producers, and partners have received direct on-site training or a formal workshop; 100% of districts report they would use this support in the future

I want to stress this last data point. The success of this program is based on continuity and relationships. The LFP pilot has been able to build a foundation and a model for what can happen across the state, but this work will not survive fits and starts. Nutrition Directors plan budgets and menus a year in advance, farmers plant crops in the spring to go to market in the late summer and fall. They rely on stability and advanced planning to efficiently feed school children a high-quality product. Without guaranteed year over year funding, this work will be lost.

The Local Food Program has been shown to stretch school nutrition budgets, improve meal quality, reduce food waste, and support local economies.

Nourish Colorado remains committed to collaborating on solutions that prioritize equity, sustainability, and resilience in our food system.

Thank you, I am happy to answer any questions.