

In Support of HB23-1087 “Fiscal Rule Advance Payment Charitable Food Grants”

Thank you esteemed members of the Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Kaye Davis, I am the Food Systems and Culinary Director of Early Morning Orchard in Palisade. We are a regenerative, diversified vegetable, orchard, food hub and educational farm employing young farmers and chefs who wish to engage meaningfully in the process of getting food from seed to the plate. Our operation has a focus on food access, working with several food pantries across the Western Slope of Colorado to provide nutrient dense produce and Colorado produced products to our food pantry partners year-round.

As the bill language mentions, HB23-1087 would allow for the advance payment for the purchase of state agricultural products by a charitable food organization using state grant money. This would be greatly beneficial especially when applied to HB 22-1364, the state funded Food Pantry Assistance Grant, currently the grant cycle of this particular grant does not align with the agricultural growing season in Colorado. Allowances through this and other state funded grants would allow our food pantry partners to forward contract with farms and other agricultural producers, ensuring that they receive food that has been grown locally, is culturally responsive and better meets the needs of their communities.

As a recipient of forward contacting through the food access programs we work with, I can attest that the outcomes have been beyond impactful:

- Full staff retention year-round and ability to provide workforce housing and benefits.
- Investment in seeds, equipment and infrastructure allowing for scaling of the operation.
- Investment in transportation that allowed us to extend our reach and support more food access programs.
- Increase in sales of 150% over the last three fiscal years.
- Over 100,000 pounds of Colorado produced produce and products to food access programs in 2022 fiscal year.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration, I’m happy to answer any questions.