



Alec Fleischer

Marketing Manager

Durango Natural Foods Cooperative

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Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony today. My name is Alec Fleischer, I live in Durango and I am the marketing Manager for Durango Natural Foods Cooperative. DNF is a 49-year-old shopper owned, community health food store dedicated towards providing healthy food options to all in a rural area.

Durango Natural Foods is in favor of HB1008, especially the provisions that allow for a tax credit for retailers and producers participating in the work of the Community Food Access Consortium. Durango Natural Foods is a small, cooperatively owned food retailer in a rural area. We struggle with large capital projects. More financial options to help small grocery stores – especially non-profits – would allow us to keep current with the times. For example, we struggle to raise capital for new fridges. This means that we spend more on energy, maintenance, and lost income when food is pulled when a fridge goes down. With a tax credit to help purchase new fridges, we could serve even more local and organic foods and keep prices down because we will no longer spend exorbitant sums on our electric bill and maintenance.

The economic multiplier on tax credits for local food must be emphasized. For example, new fridges will help us serve local and organic food in a rural area but it will also significantly reduce Green-House-Gas emissions. Old fridges use refrigerants that are thousands of times more potent than Carbon Dioxide. Our fridge example is just one instance of how Community Food Access Programs grants from last year and the new tax credits under this bill have positive ripple effects throughout the economy.

Without additional help, it feels like the big box stores are running away and small stores that serve rural areas will go under. Big chains located in urban and suburban areas have capital and can invest in projects such as new fridges that will take several years to realize a return. Increasing the allowable dollar amount in the community food access grants and allowing us to claim a tax credit on new equipment will be a game changer, helping small and rural stores to

stay open. HB1008 will help small stores continue to provide healthy food to underserved populations.

In summary, Durango Natural Foods Cooperative supports HB1008. Specifically, the Community Food Access Program provisions and the new equipment tax credits will help our cooperatively owned store share the joy of healthy food to as many people. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

Alec Fleischer

Durango Natural Foods Cooperative

Marketing Manager

Mister Chair, Members of the Committee, my name is Carol Pace. I am a volunteer with AARP Colorado. AARP has over 670,000 members in Colorado and is focused on Coloradans age 50 and above, and their families.

AARP supports HB 23-1008, Food Accessibility. Food insecurity is present in Colorado. HB23-1008 addresses food insecurity and access to healthy food. The bill identifies seniors as a community with higher-than-average rates of food insecurity. Feeding Colorado research reports 8.3% overall food insecurity in Colorado, rising to 13% for the Black population and 18% for the Hispanic population. Food insecurity is particularly significant in some rural areas. The research also estimates that amongst Coloradans aged sixty-five years and older some 90,000-100,000 may be eligible for some food programs, but not accessing those programs.

This bill funds programs related to food accessibility such as the Community Food Access Program.

The bill supports small retailers and small family farms, encouraging healthy food availability. The bill improves access to and lower prices for healthy foods in low-income and underserved areas of the state by supporting small food retailers and small family farms.

Overall the bill addresses food insecurity issues and would help older Coloradans.

We ask that the committee support HB 23-1008, Food Accessibility.

Respectfully,

Carol Pace, AARP Volunteer Advocate

References

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