

Washington, DC – Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) introduced the “Local Food and Farm Act.” Cosponsored by Rep. Nancy Boyda (D-KS), Rep. Steve Kagen (D-WI) Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL) and Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ), the “Local Food and Farm Act” promotes the health and well being of all Americans -- particularly school-age children and residents of underserved communities – while also protecting the environment and creating opportunities for local farmers and ranchers.

“We have an opportunity to reform the Farm Bill, and a fundamental element of my vision is the Local Food and Farm Act, which I introduced today,” said Congressman Blumenauer. “By increasing the availability of fresh foods in cities, schools, and underserved communities, my bill not only strengthens market opportunities for local farmers and ranchers, but it also protects the environment and gets healthy food into our communities. It is a win for everyone, and I am eager to work with the Committee to share my framework for a better, forward-looking Farm Bill.”

“Good health begins by eating healthy foods,” said Congressman Kagen. “The Local Food and Farm Act will improve our local economy as well as our health by allowing Wisconsin family farms to serve fresh, nutritious meals to our school children and families in our communities. People all across the nation want to know their fruits, vegetables and meats are fresh and safe, and this legislation will help to make this possible.”

“I am thrilled to help introduce a bill that will improve the health of all Kansans,” said Congresswoman Boyda. “Not only will the Local Food and Farm Act increase the availability of fruits and vegetables in public schools, but it will strengthen our rural economy by linking independent farms with local markets. The bill’s strong focus on nutrition encourages healthy food choices for children, adults, and the elderly, and it lays a strong foundation for encouraging good nutrition in the upcoming Farm Bill.”

The Local Food and Farm Act is supported by the American Public Health Association, the Community Food Security Coalition, Trust for America’s Health, and the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

“The Farm Bill is important not just for agriculture but also for the health of Americans,” said Jeff Levi, Executive Director of Trust for America’s Health. “The proposed bill could help the country make tremendous strides in combating the obesity epidemic, from improving school lunches, to enhancing the food stamp program, to providing greater access to affordable fruits and vegetables.”

‘The Local Food and Farm Act outlines a broad strategy to expand economic opportunities for farmers and ranchers through the reinvigoration of local and regional agricultural markets,” said Tauzer Smith with the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. “Focusing on the entire food supply chain – from agricultural producers to local processors and distributors to retail purchasers – it supports investments that would enable farmers to sell more locally grown and raised products to schools, hospitals, and retail food outlets. This bill is important because local and regional agriculture can provide opportunities for a new generation of entrepreneurial farmers and increase access to healthier food in underserved communities.”

“APHA strongly supports efforts to create and broaden programs that help communities develop farmers' markets, roadside stands and other activities to make fresh fruits and vegetables more available to residents,” said Georges Benjamin, MD, FACP, executive director of the American Public Health Association. “All people deserve access to healthy foods - especially individuals in lower-income neighborhoods who often lack transportation to supermarkets that sell fresh fruits and vegetables, which contributes to higher levels of obesity, diseases and other health ailments.”