



Jefferson Conservation District

Conservation Districts: Healthy People, Healthy Business, Healthy Land

To ensure the Farm-to-School Coordination Task Force addresses integrated community health and education, the Task Force should include a representative from one of Colorado's Conservation Districts.

The 'Farm-to-School Healthy Kids Act' and the creation of an interagency Farm-to-School Coordination Task Force is a good first step towards creating a healthier and more economically robust Colorado. Although the Act and Task Force address health and healthy communities through the lens of improved nutrition and an improved economy, this structure neglects a crucial component of creating a healthy Colorado: natural resource conservation and environmental health

In Colorado, and across the nation, Conservation Districts are implementing 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' programs that encourage sustainable agriculture practices and systems so that our nation's natural resources – our soil, water and air – will be available for the next generation. We cannot have healthy children and communities without healthy natural environments.

A representative of Colorado's Conservation Districts would be the ideal addition to this Task Force because:

- *The mission of Colorado's seventy-six (76) Conservation Districts is to provide leadership for the conservation of natural resources to ensure health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the state through a responsible conservation ethic. Historically, Conservation Districts have provided local leadership to coordinate efforts and tie activities to local conditions, needs and priorities.*
- *Conservation Districts focus heavily on education. This experience in building educational tools and programs will be crucial to developing a public engagement campaign and educating both farmers and schools on the systems, priorities, limitations and expectations of the other.*
- *Conservation Districts house the technical understanding and educational experience to build an integrated curriculum on sustainability through the Farm-to-School Program. Learning where food comes from is part of a broader sustainability curriculum that is crucial to the success of Colorado schoolchildren's Farm-to-School education and the building of healthy and stable communities.*