



SUPPORT SB 13-174
Continuation of Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council
Sen. Schwartz/Rep. Lebsack

The Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (Council) is scheduled to sunset in 2013 per the authorizing legislation (SB-10-106). While progress has been made towards the Council's purpose of convening a group of diverse stakeholders around healthy food access and expansion of direct markets for Colorado agriculture, much work still remains to be done.

Following the recommendation of Department of Regulatory Affairs' (DORA) for the continuance of the Council, SB13-174: Concerning the Continuation of Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council has passed out of the Senate with a bi-partisan vote of 22-12 (1 excused). An amendment was approved in the Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources and Energy Committee to strengthen the Council by: (1) adding two members, the Director of Colorado State Extension and a representative from an academic institution with expertise in economic systems, agriculture or health; and (2) clarifying that both small and large producers, retailers and/or wholesalers are represented in their respective Council seats.

Background & Purpose of the Council

The Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council was created in 2010 via legislation (SB 10-106) with the intent of taking a system-wide view in order to grow the state's food economy and to make healthy food available to all Coloradans. The Council was created as an advisory committee to make recommendations to the General Assembly and to the appropriate state agencies, not to make policy.

The thirteen-member Council has been meeting since January 2011, and includes representation from four state agencies (agriculture, education, human services, and public health & environment), as well as nine Gubernatorial appointments representing agricultural production, nutrition, retail, anti-hunger and rural development. The Council is led by a chair and vice-chair elected by their peers. LiveWell Colorado has provided direct funding and in-kind support for the Council's operations since its inception. More information about the Council including member profiles can be found on their website, www.cofoodscouncil.org.

Accomplishments to Date

In order to establish a common understanding of the state's food system, in 2011 the Council engaged in a number of shared learning experiences including a half-day with CSU faculty and a three-day state bus tour. Leveraging knowledge gained through these experiences, the Council established three subcommittees around which it has organized its subsequent work. Accomplished through assessment, collaboration, and reporting, the objectives of the three subcommittees are:

1. Economic development - Facilitate direct markets of healthy Colorado foods to individuals and institutions
2. Healthy food access - Promote an environment where all Coloradans can readily obtain and consume safe, culturally- and age- appropriate, nutritious food every day to achieve optimal health
3. Communications - Facilitate networking and technical assistance to build local and regional food system capacity



Subcommittees convened six regional economic development listening sessions; hosted a day-long Healthy Food Access Summit; and conducted interviews with 21 food policy councils and coalitions. These efforts and other meetings have not only informed the actions of the Council, but also have inspired work of partner organizations including:

- A task force to promote stronger participation of SNAP beneficiaries at farmers markets throughout the state and to initiate a Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- A food hub feasibility study of Fort Lyon Correctional Facility
- A project to assess and showcase current best practices in food systems funding and financing
- Support of new food systems work in state public and environmental health conferences and institutes
- Connections between local and regional food councils

Where We Are Headed

The Council delivered a report of recommendations on January 31, 2013 to the Governor's Office and the Health and Human Services and Agriculture and Natural Resources Committees of the House and Senate, as directed in SB-10-106. This report, which can be found on the Council's website, made recommendations regarding: (1) direct market technical assistance, (2) Colorado Proud, (3) food safety regulations, and (4) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

In the words of one Council member, "we have only begun to see the value of this collaborative venture." The Council envisions playing a key advisory role to the Governor, General Assembly, state agencies, state universities, local and regional food coalitions, and other organizational partners in 2013 and beyond, continuing to identify opportunities to promote our food system for the betterment of Colorado's health. The Council intends to do this through continued collaboration, convenings and assessments.

About LiveWell Colorado

LiveWell Colorado is a nonprofit organization committed to reducing obesity in Colorado by promoting healthy eating and active living. In addition to educating and inspiring people to make healthy choices, LiveWell Colorado focuses on policy, environmental and lifestyle changes that remove barriers and increase access to healthy behaviors. Working in partnership with obesity prevention initiatives across the state, LiveWell Colorado aims to provide every Coloradan with access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity in the places they live, work, learn and play.