



November 13, 2014

Dear LAUSD School Board Members,

On behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), I write to express my strong support for the LAUSD Board Resolution *Good Food Procurement Resolution 2014* (Zimmer). As the largest purchaser of food in the City of Los Angeles, LA Unified School District has the opportunity to set a high standard for the community and ensure that district funds are spent in a manner consistent with its social and environmental values. By ensuring the continued implementation of the Good Food Purchasing Policy, LAUSD can further demonstrate its ongoing leadership locally and in the nationwide effort to address the impacts of the food system.

As you know, the LAUSD School Board adopted the Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP) in 2012, in conjunction with the Board resolution *Good Food Procurement Goals*. In anticipation of a forthcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) for Food Services, the *Good Food Procurement Resolution* would reaffirm LAUSD's commitment to these values by requesting that GFPP be included in the RFP.

My NRDC colleagues Mark Izeman and Margaret Brown have been working closely with LAUSD as part of the groundbreaking Urban School Food Alliance. This Alliance, which comprises six of the largest districts in the country, seeks to use combined purchasing standards to bring down the cost of healthy and sustainable food. Thus far, we have worked with the Alliance to advance their goals of purchasing compostable trays and antibiotic-free chicken. We applaud LAUSD for this work and the broader adoption of the LA Good Food Policy.

In particular, purchasing meat and poultry raised without non-therapeutic use of antibiotics is more important than ever. Bacterial resistance to antibiotics is a major public health crisis. Increasingly, bacteria are resistant to multiple antibiotics, leading to infections that are difficult to treat and sometimes impossible to cure. While improper use of antibiotics in the health care sector is a problem, 80% of antibiotics sold in the US are for use in livestock, not humans. The majority are used to speed up animals' growth and compensate for crowded and often unsanitary conditions. This non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in meat production contributes to the spread of antibiotic resistant bacteria, which travel off of farms and into our communities—not just on the meat itself, but also in our soil, air, and water. Organizations such as the World Health Organization recognize that the “overuse and misuse of antibiotics in food animals” is a major source of the antibiotic-resistant bacteria that affect humans. Adoption of the Good Food Policy further solidifies LA's commitment to being a leader on this important issue.

In addition to avoiding meat and poultry raised with non-therapeutic antibiotics, we commend the Food Policy for prioritizing food from farming systems that minimize

harm to the environment. This includes purchasing food from certified organic farms, farms offering high biodiversity of crop yield, farms actively reducing risks created through pesticide use, as well as offering soil enrichment and water conservation programs. We likewise applaud the Food Policy for putting in place a system that minimizes purchasing of animal products (meat, dairy, and eggs), as livestock farming is one of the most significant contributors to climate change.

Finally, we support LAUSD purchasing lower-grade (less than retail quality) produce for use in prepared dishes to allow more complete use of farm produce, which will help to reduce waste and costs, as well as provisions in the Food Policy that would minimize bottled water sales and instead serve plain or filtered tap water in reusable jugs or bottles, both to minimize transport and packaging waste.

By building on its previous leadership, LAUSD has the opportunity to set a national standard for institutions leveraging their purchasing power to build a regional food economy – one in which small and mid-sized farmers have sufficient demand for their products and students with the greatest need can access healthy, high-quality food in their schools that is sustainably, fairly, and humanely produced. NRDC respectfully asks that you support this policy which encourages investment in a vibrant, sustainable regional economy that benefits all Angelenos.

Sincerely,

Erik Olson
Director, Health Program & Senior Strategic Director for Health and Food
Natural Resources Defense Council

Copy To:
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