

Local Food Distribution Infrastructure

The citizens of Northwest Wisconsin request:

- **That the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection and the Department of Commerce identify and allocate funding resources to promote the development of a local food distribution network and associated storage, processing and distribution infrastructure resources for Northwest Wisconsin.**

Background

In the Ashland and Bayfield County communities, consumers are increasingly demanding locally produced foods. The rise in consumer demand coincides with a growing recognition of the benefit to the nation's security interests of enhancing local food and energy autonomy. In the Chequamegon Bay region, a clear disconnect has been identified between local food producers who will benefit economically by reducing product transportation mileage; retailers who struggle to balance availability and reliability against consumer demand for local foods; and consumers who seek out local food products but lack consistent access.

Development of a distribution network and infrastructure would provide the following benefits:

1. Enhance regional food security by:
 - a. Expanding local marketability of diverse food products, thereby incentivizing polyculture farming and reducing regional exposure to the risks inherent in monocultural crop production;
 - b. Reducing risks of exposure to food borne pathogens by reducing exposure to centralized sources of contamination and by improving handling practices of local food sources;
 - c. Reducing the risk of supply chain disruptions and regional shortages;
 - d. Reducing the dependency of food resource availability upon energy resource availability.
2. Provide regional economic benefits by:
 - a. Reducing costs to producers for transporting products to market, thereby enhancing producer profitability;
 - b. Enhancing retailer profitability by increasing ability to offer products with the value added by local production;
 - c. Increasing regional retention of direct and indirect economic benefits of production and distribution;
 - d. Creating regional job opportunities.

For more information contact:

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