

## Local Food Distribution Infrastructure

*The citizens of Northwest Wisconsin request:*

- **That the State, DATCP, and DOC identify and allocate funding resources to promote the development of a local food distribution network and associated storage, processing and distribution infrastructure resources for Wisconsin's northernmost counties.**

### Background

In the Ashland and Bayfield County communities, as in the rest of the nation, 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 of 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.

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