

Fact Sheet: Support the Enabling Farmer, Food worker, Environmental, and Climate Targets through Innovative, Values-aligned, and Equitable (EFFECTIVE) Food Procurement Act

This legislation will better align USDA's commodity food purchases with values to support a just, healthy, and sustainable food system.

Background: USDA is the largest food purchaser in the federal government, spending billions of dollars each year on commodity food procurement, including for school districts, senior feeding programs, Indian reservations, and food banks. While USDA is making commendable efforts to shift its food purchasing to align with Administration priorities, right now the vast majority of its food purchases are not aligned with goals around climate mitigation, fair markets for producers, equity and inclusion, worker well-being, resource conservation, or animal welfare. For example, a recent analysis found:

- Only 15 corporations received 60% of the USDA Foods Program's spending, reflecting food sector concentration and undercutting sustainable and small-scale farmers, ranchers, and fishers.
- The carbon footprint of the USDA Foods Program was 19.1 million tons of CO₂e and that shifting some of its purchases toward plant-based sources of protein, in line with *Dietary Guidelines* recommendations, would save 4 million tons of CO₂e annually – equivalent to taking every vehicle in Mississippi off the road.

With this legislation, USDA could leverage its massive purchasing power to better support its own values and policy objectives, including:

- Supporting socially disadvantaged producers and worker well-being
- Ensuring equity and inclusion for those who follow restricted, religious, and/or culturally specific diets
- Mitigating climate change, protecting our environment, and promoting organic agriculture
- Supporting resilient and transparent food supply chains
- Increasing market opportunities for small-scale producers and addressing food system consolidation
- Expanding healthy choices and transparency for school districts and other program beneficiaries

What this bill will do:

- Direct USDA to use its existing framework for food procurement to make available and purchase a sufficient variety of food products that support the values and policy objectives listed above.
- Create a \$25 million pilot program that would:
 - Shift USDA away from evaluating bids based only on cost to evaluating bids based on values, including climate mitigation, worker well-being, resilient supply chains, and equity;
 - Provide grants and technical assistance to support small and socially disadvantaged producers and businesses to access market opportunities through USDA's procurement;
 - Study how USDA can shift its procurement toward a regional model;
 - Measure the greenhouse gas emissions associated with USDA's procurement and reduce emissions in line with the Biden Administration's commitments; and
 - Increase transparency in USDA's food purchasing.