

## Proposed Farm to School Law Moves Forward in Louisiana

### For Immediate Release

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**Baton Rouge, Louisiana:** Yesterday afternoon, the Louisiana Senate Education Committee moved a Farm to School bill forward that could bring more fresh local food to schools, by allowing them to directly connect with farmers.

SB 184 would increase the “small purchase threshold”, which is the maximum amount of money schools can spend on a contract to buy food items, without having to engage in a lengthy and complicated formal public bidding process with potential food providers. In Louisiana, the threshold is just \$25,000, so most school food purchases require formal bidding, and this often prevents smaller-scale farmers, who cannot spend time on detailed paperwork, from selling their food to schools.

“We are excited that SB 184 will next go to a vote in the Senate. Raising the small purchase threshold to the federal amount, now \$150,000, is good for our children, farmers, businesses and the state economy”, said Katie Mularz, Executive Director of the [Louisiana Farm to School](#) Alliance.

The bill, introduced by [Sen. Francis Thompson](#), Chair of the Agriculture Committee, is the first in a series of upcoming Farm to School initiatives.

“This is just the first step of many to forward Farm to School programming in Louisiana.” Sen. Thompson said, following the Committee hearing.

The [Recirculating Farms Coalition](#) also champions Farm to School programs in Louisiana and nationally. The organization supports SB 184. Marianne Cufone, the Executive Director of the Recirculating Farms Coalition said, “Increasing the small purchase threshold is an important way to support farmers in Louisiana.”

According to the [LSU Agricultural Center](#), Louisiana farming operations are some of the poorest in the U.S.

A significant problem is that about a third of farm food goes to waste in Louisiana, which for fruits and vegetables translates to over forty million dollars in losses.

“Making new markets - schools - for Louisiana farmers, can help reduce waste of good food, and put it to very good use - feeding our children.” Cufone said.

Over sixty-eight percent of Louisiana public school students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. If more fresh food is served in Louisiana schools, it can reach a majority of public school children.

When SB 184 becomes law, Louisiana will join 44 other states and the District of Columbia in championing the Farm to School movement.

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The Recirculating Farms Coalition is a collaborative group of farmers, educators, non-profit organizations and many others committed to creating local sources of healthy, accessible food through promoting and supporting eco-efficient farms. RFC is headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. <http://www.recirculatingfarms.org>

The Louisiana Farm to School Alliance is a network of 90 groups and growing. We provide leadership, advocacy and coordination to new and existing Farm to School programs. <http://www.louisianafarmtoschool.org/>