



## Sponsor the Bill for a Local Food and Farming Infrastructure Fund in Virginia!

This bill establishes a state-administered fund for development of local community food infrastructure projects, particularly in underserved rural and urban communities across Virginia.. **Implemented through the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID)**, the program will give preference to funding both urban and rural communities that will maximize the potential benefit of new community infrastructure projects.

*What is local food infrastructure?*

**Local food infrastructure is any facility or equipment that helps increase the availability of locally produced food for consumers in a way that enables farmers to produce and sell more food locally.**

This includes **food hubs** like Appalachian Harvest in southwest Virginia to aggregate, distribute, and market products that strengthen producers' ability to meet wholesale, retail, and institutional demand, **processing facilities** like T & E Meats in Harrisonburg that allow smaller-scale ranchers to process meats in USDA-inspected facilities for sale to the public, **shared-use commercial kitchens** like Hatch Kitchen in Richmond for starting and growing food businesses, **farmers' market pavilions**, and **incubator farms** for new farmers.

*Who benefits from local food infrastructure projects?*

For **small farmers**, local food infrastructure expands markets, adds value to their products, and helps them meet food safety requirements. **Consumers** gain greater access to locally produced food. Local food infrastructure can stimulate or support **local businesses**, from small trucking and distribution firms, to young entrepreneurs wanting to develop, test and market healthy food products. It can also strengthen the **community resilience** by reducing dependence on imported foods and global supply chains.

*Local food infrastructure sounds like a good thing, but can we afford it?*

Targeted support to local food and farming infrastructure is a smart investment in resiliency for less dependence on food shipped from across the country and the world, local economic development and jobs, and improved health and nutrition of our communities.

In the **2020 Virginia legislative session**, HB 1034 for a Local Food and Farming Infrastructure Fund came **extremely close to passage, with bipartisan support** in both the House and Senate. Sample bill text is online at <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+ful+HB1034>.

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## Compost/To Use Later

Sample bill text is online at <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+ful+HB1034>. In the 2021 session, the bill will seek to at least establish the program, perhaps on a pilot basis, and focus the support on community infrastructure that serves smaller, newer, or limited resource farmers and food entrepreneurs, underserved or environment justice communities, farmers using sustainable agricultural practices, and startups.

This includes projects that establish or maintain farmers markets, food hubs, locally-owned processing facilities, commercial kitchens, and facilities for packaging, labeling and processing of meats, dairy products, produce, or other products, including animal slaughtering facilities.