

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1731 (Wilson)

As Amended May 18, 2026

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

This bill would require the Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Office of Farm to Fork (OF2F), to establish the California Healthy Food Procurement Fund Program (CHFPPF) for purposes of cultivating equity, nurturing students, building climate resilience, supporting California agriculture, and creating scalable and sustainable changes in the school food system upon an appropriation by the Legislature.

**Major Provisions**

- 1) Requires OF2F to establish CHFPPF for purposes of cultivating equity, nurturing students, building climate resilience, supporting California agriculture, and creating scalable and sustainable changes in the school food system.
- 2) Creates the California Healthy Food Procurement Account in CDFA Fund. Requires this account consists of moneys from federal, state, industry, philanthropic, and private sources. Requires moneys in this account to be available to CDFA, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purposes of CHFPPF.

**COMMENTS**

This bill responds to a pivotal moment for California's food system, which faces two urgent and interconnected challenges: the rapid loss of California's small and mid-sized farms and the need for schools to transition away from ultra-processed foods following the passage of AB 1264 (Gabriel, 2024). To successfully implement this transition and ensure that California's farmers - rather than national suppliers - are providing the healthy food that schools will require, schools need reliable access to minimally processed foods and regional supply chains capable of providing them.

California has made significant investments in farm-to-school infrastructure through programs administered by CDFA, including the Farm to School Program and the California Food Hubs Program.

These popular programs help schools build the capacity to prepare fresh food and support the development of regional food distribution networks. They are heavily oversubscribed, with nearly 2.5 times the demand for Farm to School funding and more than 11 times the demand for Food Hub funding in the most recent grant cycles. However, CDFA's most recent Farm to School Program evaluation found that most grant funding is currently used for kitchen infrastructure and equipment as schools transition from "heat-and-serve" models toward scratch cooking. As a result, only a small share of funds is spent on buying food from farmers.

The evaluation recommends establishing a dedicated procurement fund to bridge this gap and ensure the success of the state's Farm to School investments. In addition, for the state's investments in regional food hubs to succeed in the long-term, food hubs must have consistent market opportunities, including the ability to participate in school food purchasing.

**According to the Author**

Supporting our farmers as they face stability challenges, while ensuring our state's children have access to nutritious foods, is not just important, it's essential. This bill is a powerful step forward, empowering California's farmers to give back to their communities with healthier food options, and ensuring our children thrive with the nourishment they deserve.

**Arguments in Support**

This bill builds a streamlined pathway for schools to purchase whole and minimally processed foods grown by California farmers using sustainable practices through local and regional distributors. The bill addresses a critical gap at a time when schools are transitioning away from ultra processed foods under this bill, ensuring that California's own agricultural producers are positioned to meet that rising demand rather than ceding it to national supply chains.

**Arguments in Opposition**

None on File

**FISCAL COMMENTS**

- 1) One-time and ongoing cost *pressures* of an unknown amount, possibly in the low- to mid-hundreds of thousands of dollars (General Fund, special fund, or future bonds) for CDFFA to establish and administer the procurement program. CDFFA notes its exact resource needs are unknown at this time and will depend on the level of appropriation provided for the procurement program, the scope and complexity of the program, the level of interest and number of applications received, and other factors. *Establishment of the program is subject to an appropriation by the Legislature.*
- 2) Ongoing cost pressures of an unknown but potentially significant amount (General Fund, special fund, or future bond funds), likely in the millions of dollars, for CDFFA to provide funding to approved vendors to contract with institutions serving pupils in K-12 schools to deliver procured foods at no cost. For the 2024–25 academic year, there were approximately 9,985 public schools (including charter schools) in California.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year (FY) and ongoing.

The author has submitted a budget request for FY 2026-27 for \$15 million in one-time funding for implementation of this bill.

**VOTES****ASM AGRICULTURE: 8-0-0**

**YES:** Soria, Hadwick, Aguiar-Curry, Alanis, Connolly, Jeff Gonzalez, Irwin, Ransom

**ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4**

**YES:** Wicks, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

**UPDATED**

VERSION: May 18, 2026

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