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Director Neil D. Hamilton
Agricultural Law Center
The Law School
Drake University
2507 University Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50311

Dear Professor Hamilton and Members of Iowa Food Policy Council:

Thank you for your recent submission of recommendations. The Lt. Governor and I appreciate the work of the Iowa Food Policy Council and look forward to working with you to implement these recommendations in an effort to enhance our state's food policy.

After reviewing and considering your recommendations dated December 18, 2003, my office can support and assist you in a number of ways:

1. Based on the recommendations provided by the Institutional Purchasing Task Force, I will encourage the Department of Administrative Services to continue to work with the Leopold Center and Iowa State University, Department of Economics to complete the transportation logistics and economic impact feasibility study already initiated. This study will seek to explore the cost and effectiveness of using backhaul transportation opportunities to deliver food to state agencies, per your recommendation.

Given the current budget situation it will be difficult to fund a full-time position for a meat procurement products specialist. It may be more feasible to pursue a multi-purpose food representative in cooperation with IDALS, IDED, DIA, DOE, and DAS.

2. Moreover, the Iowa Food Policy Task Force for Promoting Local Foods and Rural Economic Development recommended allocating funds from the Iowa Values Fund for food related projects using value-added agriculture programs. The Iowa Values Fund currently provides three million dollars in funding for the Value-Added Agricultural Processes Financial Assistance Program. In

addition, a key focus of the IVF legislation was the life sciences and value added agriculture. As such, a portion of the overall funding will support value added agricultural projects.

We will also continue to discuss with the Department of Homeland Security the initiation of an inventory and assessment of Iowa's food processing and distribution systems. Additionally, I have included adequate money for the Taste of Iowa program in my budget and have encouraged the Department of Economic Development to fund the Taste of Iowa program at \$150,000, and to explore the possibility of establishing other funding sources in the future.

Continued budget downfalls impact our ability to request additional appropriations for a statewide Buy Fresh, Buy Local program this fiscal year. I have extended an invitation to Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge to help us find funding for the Buy Fresh, Buy Local program.

3. Lastly, the Food Security Task Force has recommended efforts to address child health, our food stamp program and the issue of child nutrition reauthorization. I support the Iowa Department of Public Health legislation for voluntary surveillance of children's height and weight in Iowa's public schools with the presumption that the efforts must remain voluntary. This administration would also support legislation by the Department of Human Services that will disregard the value of one vehicle for qualification under FIP certification. Furthermore, we also support the Federal Child Nutrition program. The Lt. Governor and I have written a letter to our federal delegation urging them to support the Federal Child Nutrition program addressing your specific recommendations. I am enclosing a copy that that letter.

Thanks again for your continued support in an effort to create a comprehensive food policy in the great State of Iowa. By working together, I believe we can continue to streamline Iowa's food system to maximize opportunities and ensure security for all Iowans.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

Enclosure