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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**IATP, BROAD COALITION APPLAUD MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE'S FARM TO SCHOOL INVESTMENT**

*The appropriated funding and new position will increase access to fresh, healthy foods for Minnesota children*

SAINT PAUL—Today, the Minnesota Senate and House of Representatives passed the Omnibus Agriculture Policy Bill which includes dedicated funding and support for Farm to School and Early Care initiatives across the state. The bill will now head to Governor Walz to be signed. The [Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy](#) (IATP) and a coalition of other farming, nutrition and anti-hunger stakeholders worked to support this policy that will expand access to fresh, local and healthy foods for Minnesota students and new, stable markets for Minnesota farmers.

"Farm to School and Early Care initiatives have proven to be good for kids, good for farmers and good for local economies," said [Erin McKee](#), Community Food Systems Program Director at IATP. "Along with our organizational partners and supporters across the state, we applaud the Minnesota legislature for making this investment in our communities, our farmers and most importantly, our future."

The conference committee dedicated up to \$400,000 within the Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation (AGRI) program for Farm to School initiatives. For the first time, this funding may be used to pilot a reimbursement program for school districts and early care providers to encourage the purchasing of local foods. The Omnibus Agriculture Policy Bill also supports the creation of a marketing position, whose responsibilities will include helping farmers and school districts build relationships and begin working in partnership on Farm to School and Early Care initiatives.

"We are proud of and grateful to our allies from all corners of Minnesota, every constituent who made their voices heard and our legislators who fought for this program," said McKee. "We are in full support of these provisions in the bill and look forward to supporting the new opportunities it will create to connect more Minnesota children with fresh, healthy foods from Minnesota farmers."

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Based in Minneapolis with offices in Washington, D.C., and Berlin, Germany, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems.