

House Bill 5180
Testimony in Support of the Healthy Food Financing Program

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Chair Jenkins and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dick Hewitt and I am a member of the American Diabetes Association's Greater Michigan Community Leadership Board and serve as its Advocacy Chair.

On behalf of the more than one million Michiganders with diabetes, as well as the additional 2.7 million with prediabetes, the American Diabetes Association joins with other partner organizations to strongly advocate for the passage of House Bill 5180.

By establishing the Healthy Food Financing Fund, the passage of this legislation will facilitate access to fresh, healthy, and unprocessed foods in underserved communities.

Prevention of type 2 diabetes, including efforts to reduce obesity and improve nutrition, is a top legislative priority of the American Diabetes Association.

According to the Association's *Scientific Statement: The Socioecological Determinants of Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes*, food deserts disproportionately affect low-income, minority, and rural neighborhoods. Access to neighborhood grocery stores and farmers' markets appears to be associated with healthier food intake and lower levels of obesity. There is also a documented relationship between food insecurity and diabetes prevalence. In addition to being helpful in preventing or delaying onset of type 2 diabetes, proper nutrition is important for all individuals with diabetes.

Diabetes costs an estimated \$10.5 billion in Michigan each year. Total direct medical costs for diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes, prediabetes, and gestational diabetes in Michigan were estimated at \$8 billion in 2012. In addition, another \$2.5 billion was spent on indirect costs from lost productivity due to diabetes.

Making sure residents living in all areas of Michigan have access to fresh and healthy foods not only supports our priority to prevent type 2 diabetes, it also helps ensure those living with diabetes throughout the state have local options available to help them meet their individual nutrition goals.

You can surely see why the American Diabetes Association sees the Healthy Food Financing Fund as a key element in our quest to prevent diabetes in Michigan and to offer those who have diabetes access to healthy foods so they can manage their disease and avoid the terrible complications of heart disease, stroke, amputation, kidney disease, blindness, and even death.

The American Diabetes Association urges you to favorably report House Bill 5180 for passage so more Michiganders might benefit from access to fresh and healthy foods.

Thank you very much.