

COMMUNITY FOOD CAMPAIGN

Bull Mountain Land Alliance * Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council
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My name is Jeanne Charter. Our family ranches in northern Yellowstone County.

I am speaking today in support of HB 406 on behalf of the Community Food Campaign—a joint project of the Yellowstone Valley Citizen's Council and the Bull Mountain Land Alliance. Our groups are affiliates of the Northern Plains Resource Council, and our campaign includes farmers, ranchers, local food processors and other area businesses and concerned consumers.

Passage of this legislation will help strengthen our state and local economies by keeping more of Montanans' food dollars circulating here at home.

Today, 85% of Montanans' food dollars go out of state or out of the country,--a reverse of the situation in the 1950's when 70% was spent in state on Montana-made food.

Keeping more of our food dollars in our own communities is a form of local economic development which has great potential. It is a genuine opportunity to be able to "pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps."

For example, if the 130,000 or so residents of Yellowstone County each spent just \$10 a week on high quality local food instead of imported products, that activity would add over \$67 million dollars a year to the Billings-area economy—re-circulating locally to purchase other goods and services, pay wages and share the tax burden.

Statewide, if all one million residents redirected just \$10 a week to buying Montana food products, we would keep \$520 million additional dollars in state—that is over one half billion dollars a year that could be working here at home, instead of being sucked out of state or overseas.

Please support HB 406: the Montana and Country of Origin Food Placarding Act.

Jeanne Charter