

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1194

BY REPRESENTATIVES TERRY LANDRY, BAYHAM, BOYD, BRASS, BRYANT, CARPENTER, WILFORD CARTER, CHASSION, FREEMAN, GREEN, CHANCE HENRY, DANA HENRY, TRAVIS JOHNSON, JORDAN, KNOX, LAFLEUR, MANDIE LANDRY, LARVADAIN, LYONS, MARCELLE, MCMAHEN, MOORE, MURRAY, NEWELL, PHELPS, TAYLOR, THOMPSON, WALTERS, WYBLE, AND YOUNG

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 3:296(B)(4) and (5), (C), (D)(1) through (3), (4)(a)(iii), (6)(a),
3 and (7)(e), and to enact R.S. 3:296(D)(11), relative to the Healthy Food Retail Act;
4 to expand and enhance the healthy food financing program to improve access to
5 affordable fresh food in underserved communities and food deserts; to require the
6 LSU AgCenter to collaborate with the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to
7 provide data, research, and technical information relative to food deserts; to provide
8 for definitions; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 3:296(B)(4) and (5), (C), (D)(1) through (3), (4)(a)(iii), (6)(a), and
11 (7)(e) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 3:296(D)(11) is hereby enacted to read
12 as follows:

13 §296. Healthy Food Retail Act; definitions; purpose

14 * * *

15 B. The legislature finds the following:

16 * * *

17 (4) Limited food access constrains public health, neighborhood stability, and
18 local economic growth. Developing quality retail food outlets also creates jobs,
19 expands markets for Louisiana farmers, and supports economic vitality in
20 underserved communities and food deserts.

1 (5) The program established pursuant to this Chapter is intended to provide
 2 a dedicated source of financing for healthy food retailers operating in underserved
 3 communities and food deserts in Louisiana, in both urban and rural areas; to increase
 4 access to affordable healthy food so as to improve diets and health; to promote the
 5 sale and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, particularly those that are
 6 Louisiana grown; and to support expanded economic opportunities in low-income
 7 and rural communities.

8 C. As used in this Chapter, the following terms and phrases shall have the
 9 meanings hereinafter ascribed to them:

10 (1) "Food desert" means a low-income census tract in which at least five
 11 hundred persons or thirty-three percent of residents reside more than one mile from
 12 a supermarket in an urban area or more than ten miles from a supermarket in a rural
 13 area.

14 ~~(1)~~ (2) "Funding" means grants, loans, or a combination of grants and loans.

15 ~~(2)~~ (3) "Healthy food retailers" means for-profit or not-for-profit retailers
 16 that sell high quality fresh fruits and vegetables at competitive prices including but
 17 not limited to supermarkets, grocery stores, and farmers' markets.

18 ~~(3)~~ (4) "Program" means a public-private partnership established to provide
 19 a dedicated source of financing for food retailers that increase access to fresh fruits
 20 and vegetables and other affordable healthy food for Louisiana residents managed
 21 by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

22 ~~(4)~~ (5) "Underserved community" means a geographic area that has limited
 23 access to healthy food retailers and is located in a lower-income or high-poverty
 24 area, or an area that is otherwise determined to have serious healthy food access
 25 limitations.

26 D.(1) To the extent funds are available, the Louisiana Department of
 27 Agriculture and Forestry, in cooperation with public and private sector partners, shall
 28 ~~establish~~ administer a financing program that provides grants and loans to healthy
 29 food retailers and related food access projects that increase access to fresh fruits and
 30 vegetables and other affordable healthy food in underserved communities including

1 verified food deserts, with priority given to projects located in such areas. The
 2 department shall also prioritize projects that increase access to affordable fresh food
 3 and demonstrate community demand, implementation capacity, and long-term
 4 sustainability, to the extent that funding is available.

5 (2) The department may contract with one or more qualified nonprofit
 6 organizations or community development financial institutions to administer all or
 7 portions of the program described in this Section through a grants or public-private
 8 ~~partnership~~ partnerships, to raise including raising matching funds, ~~market~~ marketing
 9 the program statewide, ~~evaluate~~ evaluating applicants, ~~make~~ making award
 10 decisions, ~~underwrite~~ underwriting loans, operating a revolving loan fund, and
 11 ~~monitor~~ monitoring compliance and impact. The department and its partners shall
 12 coordinate with complementary nutrition assistance and education programs.

13 (3) The program shall provide funding on a competitive, ~~one-time~~ basis as
 14 appropriate for the eligible project.

15 (4)(a) The program may provide funding for projects such as:

16 * * *

17 (iii) Farmers' markets and public markets, food cooperatives, mobile markets
 18 and delivery projects, and distribution projects that enable food retailers in
 19 underserved communities or food deserts to regularly obtain fresh produce.

20 * * *

21 (6) In order to be considered for funding, an applicant shall meet the
 22 following criteria:

23 (a) The project for which the applicant seeks funding shall benefit an
 24 underserved community or a food desert.

25 * * *

26 (7) Applicants shall be evaluated on the following criteria in order to
 27 determine the funding awarded:

28 * * *

1 (e) The degree to which the project will have a positive economic impact on
2 the underserved community or food desert, including ~~by~~ creating or retaining jobs
3 for local residents.

4 * * *

5 (11) The Louisiana State University Agricultural Center shall collaborate
6 with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to provide data, research,
7 and technical information relative to the identification and geographic distribution
8 of food deserts across the state, from available sources.

9 * * *

10 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
11 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
12 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
13 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
14 effective on the day following such approval.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____