

ASSEMBLY, No. 3739

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “New Jersey Local Food Council” and requires development of “New Jersey Local Food Plan.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** establishing the New Jersey Local Food Council and
2 supplementing Title 4 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. There is established in, but not of, the Department of
8 Agriculture the “New Jersey Local Food Council,” which shall be
9 an interagency body responsible for the coordination of agricultural,
10 economic, educational, environmental, fiscal, health and public
11 safety, and public-private partnership initiatives to promote the
12 cultivation, distribution, production, sale, and consumption of food
13 grown and produced in New Jersey. The council shall consist of the
14 Secretary of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Education, the
15 Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the Commissioner of
16 Health, and the Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey
17 Economic Development Authority, or their respective designees, all
18 of whom shall serve ex officio.

19 b. The council shall be responsible for the development,
20 establishment, implementation, monitoring, and updating of the
21 New Jersey Local Food Plan. The plan shall set forth initiatives to:

22 (1) increase production, sale, and consumption of locally grown
23 and produced foods;

24 (2) create jobs and economic opportunities from the promotion
25 of locally grown and produced foods;

26 (3) improve the standard of living and quality of life of farmers,
27 agricultural workers, machinists, and other people involved in the
28 production of locally grown and produced foods through education,
29 skills development, and training;

30 (4) integrate maintaining and enhancing the availability of
31 farming equipment and the economic viability of farming
32 equipment suppliers in and near farming communities throughout
33 the State;

34 (5) coordinate the use of State-owned outlets, such as gift shops
35 at State parks or museums, and other venues in the State to sell and
36 otherwise promote locally grown and produced foods and items
37 using these foods as components or ingredients;

38 (6) monitor and coordinate protections for land, water, and other
39 resources used in the cultivation and production of locally grown
40 and produced foods to ensure food safety and environmental
41 protection of those resources; and

42 (7) increase access to healthy foods for all residents of the State
43 and reduce food insecurity, food waste, and hunger.

44 The Department of Agriculture shall provide primary staff and
45 clerical support, as needed, to the council.

46 c. Within 60 days after the effective date of this act, the
47 council shall meet, choose a chair from among its members, and
48 develop and adopt a procedure by which the council shall develop,

1 establish, implement, monitor, and update the New Jersey Local
2 Food Plan required pursuant to subsection b. of this section in
3 consultation with the Local Food Advisory Board established
4 pursuant to section 2 of this act. The council shall issue the New
5 Jersey Local Food Plan electronically to the Governor and, pursuant
6 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature no
7 later than one year after the date of the first meeting of the council.
8 The Department of Agriculture shall post the New Jersey Local
9 Food Plan on the Department of Agriculture's website. Thereafter,
10 the council shall update the New Jersey Local Food Plan every five
11 years and report the updates in the same manner as the initial plan is
12 reported.

13
14 2. a. There is established, as an advisory body to the New
15 Jersey Local Food Council, the "Local Food Advisory Board." The
16 Local Food Advisory Board shall consist of 15 members. Within
17 90 days after the date of enactment of this act, the members of the
18 advisory board shall be appointed as follows: five by the President
19 of the Senate, five by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and
20 five by the Governor, but of each group of five appointees, no more
21 than three may be from the same political party. The President of
22 the Senate shall appoint one member representing farmers, one
23 member representing fishermen, one member representing food
24 processors, one member representing owners and operators of
25 restaurants and their suppliers, and one member representing
26 farming equipment suppliers. The Speaker of the General
27 Assembly shall appoint one member representing owners and
28 operators of supermarkets and grocery stores, one member
29 representing food banks, one member representing nutritionists and
30 health professionals, one member with a background in marketing,
31 and one member with a background in banking and agricultural
32 financing. The Governor shall appoint one member representing
33 economic and workforce development advisors and consultants, one
34 member representing State colleges and universities, one member
35 representing vocational technical schools, one member with
36 experience transporting commodities and produce, and one member
37 with experience managing farmers markets.

38 b. The Local Food Advisory Board shall be responsible for
39 providing expert information to New Jersey Local Food Council
40 concerning issues affecting the development and implementation of
41 the New Jersey Local Food Plan required pursuant to section 1 of
42 this act.

43
44 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes the “New Jersey Local Food Council,” in, but not of, the Department of Agriculture. The council would be an interagency body charged with coordinating agricultural, economic, educational, environmental, fiscal, health and public safety, and public-private partnership initiatives to promote the cultivation, distribution, production, sales, and consumption of food grown and produced in New Jersey. The bill requires the council to develop the “New Jersey Local Food Plan,” setting forth initiatives enumerated in subsection b. of section 1 of the bill.

The council would be made up of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Education, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the Commissioner of Health, and the Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, or their respective designees, all of whom would serve ex officio. The bill further establishes the “Local Food Advisory Board” to advise the council on issues affecting the development and implementation of the New Jersey Local Food Plan. It would be a 15-member board, to be appointed as set forth in subsection a. of section 2 of the bill.

A report issued in February 2017 by the Vermont Center for Agriculture & Food Systems and the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, recommended establishing these types of coordinated advisory councils to bolster the sustainability of agriculture and food networks through the country. Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Vermont have already taken steps to establish local food plans through these types of advisory bodies in order to address food insecurity in their respective states.