

P.L. 2025, Joint Resolution No. 19, *approved January 12, 2026*
Assembly Joint Resolution, No. 229 (*First Reprint*)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** concerning the right to adequate food.
2
3 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
4 *State of New Jersey:*
5
6 1. a. The Legislature finds and declares that the State shall:
7 (1) establish the principles and bases for the promotion,
8 protection, respect, and guarantee of the effective exercise of the
9 right to adequate food and interdependent rights;
10 (2) promote planning and coordination between State, county,
11 and municipal entities in its actions aimed at guaranteeing the full
12 exercise of the right to adequate food;
13 (3) promote the production, supply, fair and equitable
14 distribution, and consumption of, nutritious, sufficient, high-quality,
15 safe, and culturally appropriate foods to promote the protection and
16 exercise of the right to adequate food and to avoid food waste to the
17 greatest extent possible;
18 (4) strengthen the State’s self-sufficiency and food security;
19 (5) establish the bases for social participation in actions aimed
20 at achieving the full exercise of the right to adequate food; and
21 (6) promote the creation of sustainable food environments that
22 encourage informed consumption of healthy and nutritious foods.
23 b. The Legislature further finds and declares that all people,
24 individually and collectively, shall have the right to adequate food
25 at all times, to have access to food for daily consumption, as well as
26 physical and economic access to safe food of nutritional quality and
27 in sufficient quantity to satisfy their physiological needs at all
28 stages of their life cycle, enabling their full development and a
29 dignified life, in accordance with individual and cultural needs,

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
¹Senate SEG committee amendments adopted December 11, 2025.

without jeopardizing the satisfaction of other basic needs and without hindering the enjoyment of other rights.

c. The Legislature further finds and declares that the principles espoused in this resolution shall serve in perpetuity to inspire and guide future laws, rules, and regulations.

2. As used in this resolution:

“Access” means the ability of all individuals to save and exchange seeds and the right to grow, raise, harvest, produce, and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being, as long as the individual does not commit trespassing, theft, poaching, or ¹[other abuses] infringement¹ of ¹an owner’s property rights under the “Plant Variety Protection Act,” Pub.L. 91-577 (7 U.S.C. s.2321 et seq.) or other abuses of¹ private property rights, public lands, or natural resources in the harvesting, production, or acquisition of food. ¹No individual may sell, trade, or allow reproduction of trademarked or patented seeds for commercial purposes in a manner that would infringe or otherwise violate the rights of the original rightsholder.¹

“Economic access to food” means an adequate balance, without jeopardizing the satisfaction of other basic needs, between the financial resources of an individual and the cost of food, the means to procure food, or the means of production required in supply systems.

“Food availability” means the ability of every individual to feed themselves adequately, whether directly through work on the land, through the sustainable management of biodiversity, water, and knowledge, or through efficient and affordable supply systems.

“Food sovereignty” means the capacity of the people of New Jersey to freely establish the State’s priorities regarding the production, supply, and access to adequate food for the entire population, based on State production and including the choice of techniques and technologies that are optimal for ensuring people's well-being.

“Healthy food” means food that is consistent with the federal Food and Drug Association requirements for the use of the term “healthy” in food labeling pursuant to 21 C.F.R. ¹s.¹ 101.65.

“Individual” means a natural person.

“Local” means relating to the State of New Jersey.

“Nutritional needs” means the combination of nutrients for physical and mental growth, development^{1,1} and maintenance ¹[L]¹ and physical activity that is sufficient to satisfy human physiological needs at all stages of the life cycle, according to sex and occupation.

“Person” means the same as that term as defined in R.S.1:1-2.

1 “Physical access to food” means the ability of every individual to
2 have food or the means to procure food physically within their
3 reach.

4 “Sustainability” means reducing the environmental impact of
5 food production, respecting biodiversity and ecosystems, and
6 prioritizing locally grown food in order to enable access to food for
7 present and future generations.

8 “Underdeveloped community” means a community that the
9 Commissioner of Health determines exhibits lower levels of
10 economic prosperity, education, healthcare, and access to food,
11 compared to other communities in the State.

12

13 3. a. The Legislature hereby recognizes the right to adequate
14 food.

15 b. The right to adequate food shall include, but need not be
16 limited to:

17 (1) the satisfaction of nutritional needs;

18 (2) food availability;

19 (3) physical access to food;

20 (4) economic access to food;

21 (5) the acceptability and cultural relevance of foods, considering
22 the non-nutrition related values associated with food and food
23 consumption, and the well-founded concerns of consumers about
24 the nature of the foods available;

25 (6) sustainability;

26 (7) food sovereignty; and

27 (8) access to, and the availability and sanitation of, water for use
28 by individuals for personal and domestic consumption and for the
29 production of food in a sufficient, healthy, acceptable, and
30 affordable manner.

31 c. Nothing in this section shall be construed as providing the
32 basis for, or subject to, a private right of action for violations of this
33 resolution or any other law.

34

35 4. Every State entity is encouraged to:

36 a. promote, respect, and protect ¹[of]¹ the exercise of the right
37 to adequate food, in accordance with the principles of universality,
38 interdependence, indivisibility, progressiveness, subsidiarity,
39 environmental sustainability, precautionary principle, social
40 participation, gender and age equality, the best interests of children,
41 cultural diversity, efficiency, free competition, transparency, and
42 accountability; and

43 b. prioritize ¹[of]¹ the needs of underdeveloped communities,
44 including the ability of underdeveloped communities to grow food.

45

46 5. a. Every State, county, and municipal entity is encouraged
47 to:

- 1 (1) take all necessary affirmative and compensatory actions to
- 2 promote, respect, and protect the exercise of the right to adequate
- 3 food;
- 4 (2) coordinate and collaborate with other State, county, and
- 5 municipal entities as necessary to implement the right to adequate
- 6 food; and
- 7 (3) coordinate and collaborate with private persons and entities
- 8 as necessary to implement the right to adequate food.
- 9 b. Every State, county, and municipal entity is encouraged to
- 10 coordinate with the Department of Agriculture to:
- 11 (1) prioritize policies and programs that:
- 12 (a) help New Jersey farmers better access the commercial food
- 13 market in this State;
- 14 (b) help New Jersey farmers make farming a sustainable
- 15 lifestyle; and
- 16 (c) contribute to growing the number of new farmers in the
- 17 State;
- 18 (2) when purchasing food, prioritize the purchase of food from
- 19 New Jersey farms;
- 20 (3) when implementing policies or making policy decisions,
- 21 consider the implications to farmers; and
- 22 (4) promote farmland preservation and utilization^{1,1}
- 23
- 24 6. The Department of Health may promote initiatives for the
- 25 establishment and proper operation of food banks, licensed pursuant
- 26 to section 4 of P.L.1982, c.178 (C.24:4A-4), and soup kitchens for
- 27 the purpose of ensuring access to adequate food, free of charge or at
- 28 affordable prices and in locations determined by the Commissioner
- 29 of Health to be broadly physically accessible to individuals.
- 30
- 31 7. a. The Department of Agriculture may promote the
- 32 importance of sustainable food production practices.
- 33 b. The Department of Agriculture may coordinate ¹[,]¹ with
- 34 such other State, county, municipal, and private entities as the
- 35 Secretary of Agriculture determines necessary, ¹[regarding] to
- 36 promote¹ the equitable access of small-scale and medium-scale food
- 37 producers, including family farms, to the commercial food market.
- 38
- 39 8. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.
- 40
- 41
- 42 _____
- 43
- 44 Recognizes right to adequate food.