

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19

A JOINT RESOLUTION concerning the right to adequate food.

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.4:10-15.1 Findings, declarations.

1. a. The Legislature finds and declares that the State shall:

(1) establish the principles and bases for the promotion, protection, respect, and guarantee of the effective exercise of the right to adequate food and interdependent rights;

(2) promote planning and coordination between State, county, and municipal entities in its actions aimed at guaranteeing the full exercise of the right to adequate food;

(3) promote the production, supply, fair and equitable distribution, and consumption of, nutritious, sufficient, high-quality, safe, and culturally appropriate foods to promote the protection and exercise of the right to adequate food and to avoid food waste to the greatest extent possible;

(4) strengthen the State's self-sufficiency and food security;

(5) establish the bases for social participation in actions aimed at achieving the full exercise of the right to adequate food; and

(6) promote the creation of sustainable food environments that encourage informed consumption of healthy and nutritious foods.

b. The Legislature further finds and declares that all people, individually and collectively, shall have the right to adequate food at all times and to have access to food for daily consumption, as well as physical and economic access to safe food of nutritional quality and in sufficient quantity to satisfy their physiological needs at all stages of their life cycle, enabling their full development and a dignified life, in accordance with individual and cultural needs, 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.

C.4:10-15.2 Definitions.

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 infringement of an 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 of private property rights, public lands, or natural resources in the harvesting, production, or acquisition of food. No 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.

"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. s. 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, and maintenance 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.

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

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

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

C.4:10-15.3 Right to adequate food.

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

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

- (1) the satisfaction of nutritional needs;
- (2) food availability;
- (3) physical access to food;
- (4) economic access to food;
- (5) the acceptability and cultural relevance of foods, considering the non-nutrition-related values associated with food and food consumption, and the well-founded concerns of consumers about the nature of the foods available;
- (6) sustainability;
- (7) food sovereignty; and
- (8) access to, and the availability and sanitation of, water for use by individuals for personal and domestic consumption and for the production of food in a sufficient, healthy, acceptable, and affordable manner.

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

C.4:10-15.4 State entities encouraged to promote, protect right to adequate food.

4. Every State entity is encouraged to:

- a. promote, respect, and protect the exercise of the right to adequate food, in accordance with the principles of universality, interdependence, indivisibility, progressiveness, subsidiarity, environmental sustainability, precautionary principle, social participation, gender and age equality, the best interests of children, cultural diversity, efficiency, free competition, transparency, and accountability; and
- b. prioritize the needs of underdeveloped communities, including the ability of underdeveloped communities to grow food.

C.4:10-15.5 Actions to promote, protect right to adequate food.

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

- (1) take all necessary affirmative and compensatory actions to promote, respect, and protect the exercise of the right to adequate food;
- (2) coordinate and collaborate with other State, county, and municipal entities as necessary to implement the right to adequate food; and
- (3) coordinate and collaborate with private persons and entities as necessary to implement the right to adequate food.

b. Every State, county, and municipal entity is encouraged to coordinate with the Department of Agriculture to:

- (1) prioritize policies and programs that:
 - (a) help New Jersey farmers better access the commercial food market in this State;
 - (b) help New Jersey farmers make farming a sustainable lifestyle; and
 - (c) contribute to growing the number of new farmers in the State;
- (2) when purchasing food, prioritize the purchase of food from New Jersey farms;
- (3) when implementing policies or making policy decisions, consider the implications to farmers; and
- (4) promote farmland preservation and utilization.

C.24:4A-4.2 Initiatives related to operation of food banks, promotion.

6. The Department of Health may promote initiatives for the establishment and proper operation of food banks, licensed pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1982, c.178 (C.24:4A-4), and soup kitchens for the purpose of ensuring access to adequate food, free of charge or at affordable prices and in locations determined by the Commissioner of Health to be broadly physically accessible to individuals.

C.4:10-15.6 Department of Agriculture, promotion of sustainable food production practices.

7. a. The Department of Agriculture may promote the importance of sustainable food production practices.

b. The Department of Agriculture may coordinate with such other State, county, municipal, and private entities as the Secretary of Agriculture determines necessary to promote the equitable access of small-scale and medium-scale food producers, including family farms, to the commercial food market.

8. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 12, 2026.