

Public institutions across the country spend billions of dollars of public money every year on food. In New York State, cities purchase enormous amounts of food to feed their residents through schools, hospitals, senior centers, shelters, child care centers, and criminal justice facilities. NYC alone spends half a billion dollars on institutional food and serves 230 million meals annually. In Buffalo, public schools serve 10 million meals and spend \$18 million dollars on school children and communities each year. These choices have a huge impact on everything from public health to local economies to animal welfare. But in most instances, food purchasing decisions are based on the cheapest bids—not the best ones. The **Good Food NY Bill** helps cities and school districts think differently about the power of their purchasing policies and puts five values at its core: strong local economies, protecting the environment, worker rights, animal welfare, and nutrition.

## IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC

**New Yorkers are paying a lot of taxes to support these public food programs—and food prices are higher than ever right now. Won't changing the standards just make things more expensive for taxpayers?**

- This bill will give municipalities new opportunities to make their own decisions about how to best spend their food budgets. It will allow towns and cities to contract with local farms and food businesses to ensure that our taxpayer dollars are staying in the state and being reinvested in our local and regional economies.
- Our current food procurement system uses a shortsighted approach that saddles taxpayers with hidden long-term costs. When we purchase the cheapest food from big corporations, we're fueling practices that pollute our air and water and contribute to environmental disasters. We're supporting companies that exploit and underpay workers, who must then turn to public programs to help make ends meet. It's time to get to the root of these issues. If NYC alone were to replace 15% of beef proteins with plant proteins, that would decrease annual CO2 emissions by about 21 million lbs. and decrease annual water use by 100 million gallons.

**We need to address racial justice issues in New York, but is food procurement really the best way to do that? Shouldn't we be focusing more on education or job programs?**

- Food and agriculture are two of the most racially inequitable sectors in New York state, and demand our attention just as much as any other sector. Most food chain workers are people of color, immigrants, and women (Food Chain Workers Alliance). Black ownership of farms has dwindled dramatically, a 98% decline between 1900 and 1997 (US Congressional Research Service). We must tackle racial justice issues from all fronts, and embed values of equity, justice and inclusion in all of our public decision-making.
- We have a real opportunity to boost farmers and business owners of color, while also improving the quality of the foods being delivered to our communities of color through school meals and other public programs.

## SUPPLY CHAIN IMPACT

**How does this bill change current labor laws?**

- This bill does not legislate new labor laws, and nothing in the bill requires farms or food producers to go beyond existing state and federal standards. The bill simply allows municipalities to prioritize suppliers who follow fair labor practices when selecting their bids—for example, as evidenced by a labor peace agreement with their workforce—as currently permitted under state and federal labor laws.

**How will this impact both rural and urban farmers?**

- The bill offers preference to rural and urban farmers throughout the state, particularly small and BIPOC producers, who have not historically had the opportunity to secure contracts with public agencies. The bill affords public agencies the option to not be bound to the lowest cost bidder, but instead offers them the option to select vendors in alignment with their values.

## SUPPLY CHAIN IMPACT

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### How will this impact NYS farmers? Will this positively impact them?

- This will positively impact NYS farmers by virtue of the 'local economies' value area. The bill language specifies that “preference shall be given to New York state or regional suppliers that are sourcing food products in which fifty-one percent or more of the raw agricultural materials have been grown, harvested, processed and manufactured from within the state or region (within one hundred miles for produce and two hundred miles for animal products)”. This includes NYS farmers.
- With that said, NYS farmers benefit simply by being growers within the state. This means that any institution can choose to preference NYS growers and producers.

### Why is it important that the Good Food NY Bill require public institutions to request supply chain data from their bidders?

- Understanding where food is being procured from will allow institutions, the public and farmers to have a better understanding of how municipalities are purchasing food.

## NYS LEGISLATURE

### Why does Good Food NY Bill live in GMU 103?

- GMU 103 is the place within NYS procurement law that guides municipal-level food purchasing decisions. This is the law that institutions are guided by when crafting solicitations and signing contracts with food producers. It is also the law that provides carve-outs for local, NYS-based food purchasing so it made sense to insert the Good Food NY bill into GMU 103.

### Where does the 10% carveout come from?

- In drafting the bill language with our Legislative Sponsors, they suggested that it would be in line with the language in other NYS laws, including Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program (MWBE) language.

## INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

### Is the Good Food NY Bill 103 a mandate or can institutions choose to opt into values-based procurement?

- The Good Food NY Bill is NOT a mandate and has no budget implications for institutions. Institutions can choose to go with either the lowest responsible bidder or opt into values-based procurement. It gives them flexible options by allowing them to shift their procurement practices in a way that best suits the needs of those that benefit from the institution's services.

### Would it be feasible for public institutions to purchase from vendors since there is a 10% carveout and therefore, a cost increase?

- We are hearing from institutions that they want this additional flexibility to purchase food from suppliers that are upholding values that are important to both those institutions and the NYS residents they are serving. The Good Food NY bill affords institutions more options on the types of suppliers they want to contract with, thereby democratizing local food purchasing decision-making. Should an institution be disinterested in these options that the Good Food NY bill opens up, they will still be allowed to purchase food under the current status quo model, which is selecting the lowest bidder.

**The NY State and NYC Good Food Purchasing Program Coalitions and the Good Food Buffalo Coalition are composed of over 70 grassroots leaders, advocates, and organizations working to improve public procurement policies.**

To cosponsor this bill or for questions, please contact Ribka Getachew, Community Food Advocates' Director of the NY Good Food Purchasing Program Campaign: [rgetachew@foodadvocates.org](mailto:rgetachew@foodadvocates.org)

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GOOD FOOD NY BILL: FAQs

