



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Better Nutrition Coming to NY Thanks to Sanders' Farming Bill

JAMES SANDERS JR. June 8, 2016



Today, New York State took an important step forward in improving the health of all its residents by passing legislation introduced by State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village), by a vote of 60-0, which would help expand the availability, affordability and distribution of locally grown, farm fresh foods.

The bill (S3265A) known as the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act sets state procurement goals for the purchase of these home grown products, giving priority to area farms. It requires that 20 percent of all the food purchased by state agencies and state-owned facilities come from local farms in 2016, with that number set to increase to 50 percent by 2021.

“Daily consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables is paramount to good health and may reduce the risk of heart disease and protect against certain types of cancers,” Sanders said. “Some of the best produce is grown right here in New York, and this legislation makes it easier for that bounty to make its way to everyone’s plate.”

The legislation also establishes into state law the NYS Council of Food Policy which develops and makes recommendations on state regulations, legislation and budget proposals in the area of food policy. This entity would facilitate the growth of local agriculture, including job creation, by educating the public on the importance of eating fresh foods and ensuring that a supply of those foods is readily available to all New York residents.

The council would also encourage agencies which are fully or partially funded by the state and spend more than \$25,000 annually on food to purchase 25 percent of those products from local farms by 2018, increasing to 40 percent by 2023. To meet these objectives when awarding state contracts, preference may be given to a local food grower provided that such bidder’s price is not more than 10 percent higher than the lowest bid.

In order to keep track of these new goals, the NYS Council of Food Policy would assist state agencies and state-owned facilities in developing a system for identifying the amount of local farm food products purchased, using 2017 as a baseline and then tracking and reporting the progress on an annual basis.

Having now passed the senate, Sanders’ legislation will move on to the Assembly where a companion bill (A7090A) has been introduced by Assembly Members Fred Thiele Jr. and Frank Skartados. Once it gets the green light there, it will be delivered to the Governor’s desk to be signed into law.