

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 153 Healthy Food Financing Initiative

SPONSOR(S): Santiago and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 760

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee		Gregory	Harrington
2) Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) State Affairs Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Food deserts are urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options. Healthy Food Financing Initiatives are programs designed to make funding available in the form of loans, grants, promotions, and other programs to create healthy food options in food deserts.

The bill directs the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) to create a Healthy Food Financing Initiative (program). Specifically the bill:

- Authorizes DACS to contract with one or more qualified non-profit organizations or Florida-based federally certified community development financial institutions to administer the program and creates eligibility criteria for such organizations.
- Requires DACS to establish program and eligibility guidelines.
- Requires DACS to monitor compliance and the impact of the program.
- Directs projects under the program to be located in underserved communities; primarily serve low to moderate income families; and provide for the construction, renovation, or expansion of independent grocery stores or supermarkets and community facilities.
- Requires DACS to report annually to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the projects funded, geographic distribution of projects, program costs, and program outcomes.
- Enumerates program application requirements.
- Directs DACS or the third-party administer to give preference to local, Florida-based grocers and business owners; consider the level of need in the area served; and consider the project's positive economic impact when determining which projects to finance.
- Specifies how program financing may be utilized.
- Requires DACS to adopt rules to implement the program.
- Makes creation and implementation of the program contingent on an appropriation.

The bill appears to have an insignificant negative fiscal impact on DACS. This bill will likely have an indeterminate positive fiscal impact on the "independent grocery stores and supermarkets" and "community facilities" eligible to receive financial assistance.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Food Deserts

Food deserts are urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options. The lack of access contributes to a poor diet and may lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.¹

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Economic Research Service estimates that 23.5 million people live in food deserts. More than half of those people (13.5 million) are low-income.²

The USDA, the U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) identifies a food desert as a census tract with a substantial share of residents who live in low-income areas that have low levels of access to a grocery store or healthy, affordable food retail outlet. Census tracts qualify as food deserts if they meet low-income and low-access thresholds. Such terms are defined as:

- "Low-income communities" have:
 - a poverty rate of 20 percent or greater; or
 - a median family income at or below 80 percent of the area median family income.
- "Low-access communities" have at least 500 persons or at least 33% of the census tract's population living more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store (10 miles in the case of non-metropolitan census tracts).³

Healthy Food Financing Initiatives

In order to decrease the presence of food deserts, several federal and state agencies have undertaken initiatives to increase access to healthy, affordable foods in these communities.

At the federal level, USDA, the Treasury, and HHS work to make funding available in the form of loans, grants, promotions, and other programs to create healthy food options in food deserts.⁴ These programs:

- Provide financial and technical assistance;
- Make funds available through selected Rural Development and Agricultural Marketing Service programs;
- Provide tax credits; and
- Award competitive grants to Community Development Corporations to support projects that finance grocery stores, farmers markets, and other sources of fresh nutritious food.⁵

The federal programs seek to increase access to whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat free or low-fat dairy, and lean meats that are perishable (fresh, refrigerated, or frozen) or canned as

¹ USDA, Food Deserts, <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/foodDeserts.aspx> (last visited November 18, 2015).

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ HHS, *Healthy Food Financing Initiative*, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/community-economic-development/healthy-food-financing> (last visited November 18, 2015).

⁵ Id.

well as nutrient-dense foods and beverages encouraged by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.⁶

Twenty-seven states have taken some action to address the issue of food deserts. These include creating Healthy Food Financing Initiatives, undertaking studies, expanding financial support, providing low interest loans, studying access to food, and providing tax incentives.⁷

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)

CDFIs are banks, credit unions, loan funds, microloan funds, or venture capital providers that help families finance their first homes, support community residents starting businesses, and invest in local health centers, schools, or community centers for low income communities.⁸ CDFIs are certified by the CDFI Fund.⁹ The CDFI Fund is an agency within the Treasury that promotes economic revitalization in distressed communities throughout the United States by providing financial assistance and information to CDFIs.¹⁰ Once certified, a CDFI may apply for awards under the CDFI Fund's competitive programs, including the Capital Magnet Fund, CDFI Bond Guarantee Program, Community Development Financial Institutions Program, and Native Initiatives.¹¹

Effect of the Proposed Changes

The bill directs DACS to establish a Healthy Food Financing Initiative (program) that is comprised of and coordinates the use of federal, state, and private loans and grants, federal tax credits, and other forms of financial assistance. This financial assistance must be used for the construction, rehabilitation, or expansion of independent grocery stores, supermarkets, and community facilities to increase access to fresh produce and other nutritious food in underserved communities.

The bill defines the following terms:

- "Community facility" means a property owned by a nonprofit or for-profit entity or a unit of government in which health and human services are provided and space is offered in a manner that provides increased access to, or delivery or distribution of, food or other agricultural products to encourage public consumption and household purchases of fresh produce or other healthy food to improve the public health and well-being of low-income children, families, and older adults.
- "Independent grocery store or supermarket" means an independently-owned grocery store or supermarket whose parent company does not own more than 40 grocery stores throughout the country based upon ownership conditions as identified in the latest Nielsen Trade Dimensions grocery store database.
- "Low-income community" means a population census tract, as reported in the most recent U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey,¹² that meets one of the following criteria:
 - A poverty rate of at least 20 percent;
 - In the case of a low-income community located outside of a metropolitan area, the median family income does not exceed 80 percent of the statewide median family income; or

⁶ USDA, *Food Deserts, Frequently Asked Questions*, <https://apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/FAQ.aspx#healthyfood> (last visited November 18, 2015); the guidelines are available at: http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dietary_guidelines_for_americans/PolicyDoc.pdf.

⁷ Healthy Food Portal, *Policy Efforts and Impacts, State and Local*, <http://healthyfoodaccess.org/policy-efforts-and-impacts/state-and-local> (last visited November 18, 2015).

⁸ CDFI Fund, *What Are CDFIs?*, https://www.cdfifund.gov/Documents/CDFI_infographic_v08A.pdf (last visited November 18, 2015).

⁹ CDFI Fund, *Certification*, <https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/certification/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited November 18, 2015).

¹⁰ CDFI Fund, *About Us*, <https://www.cdfifund.gov/about/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited November 20, 2015).

¹¹ Id.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, *Our Surveys and Programs*, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys.html> (last visited November 20, 2015).

- In the case of a low-income community located inside of a metropolitan area, the median family income does not exceed 80 percent of the statewide median family income or 80 percent of the metropolitan median family income, whichever is greater.
- "Moderate-income community" means a population census tract, as reported in the most recent U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, in which the median family income is between 81 and 95 percent of the median family income for the state or metropolitan area.
- "Underserved community" means a distressed urban, suburban, or rural geographic area where a substantial number of residents have low access to a full-service grocery store or supermarket. An area with limited supermarket access must be:
 - A census tract, as determined to be an area with low access by the USDA, as identified in the Food Access Research Atlas;¹³
 - Identified as a limited supermarket access area as recognized by the CDFI Fund;¹⁴ or
 - Identified as an area with low access to a supermarket or grocery store through a methodology that has been adopted for use by another governmental or philanthropic healthy food initiative.

The bill authorizes DACS to contract with one or more non-profit organizations or Florida-based federally certified CDFI to administer the program. To be eligible to contract with DACS to administer the program, the CDFI must demonstrate:

- Prior experience in healthy food financing;
- Support from the CDFI Fund within the Treasury;
- The ability to administer lending and tax credit programs; and
- The ability to assume full financial risk for loans made under the program.

The bill directs DACS to establish program guidelines, raise matching funds, promote the program statewide, evaluate applicants, underwrite and disburse grants and loans, and monitor program compliance and impact. To carry out these directives, the bill authorizes DACS to contract with a third-party. This third-party must report to DACS annually.

The bill directs DACS to create eligibility guidelines and provide financing through an application process. Eligible projects must:

- Be located in an underserved community;
- Primarily serve low-income or moderate-income communities; and
- Provide for the construction of new independent grocery stores or supermarkets; the renovation or expansion of, including infrastructure upgrades to, existing independent grocery stores or supermarkets; or the construction, renovation or expansion of, including infrastructure upgrades to, community facilities to improve the availability and quality of fresh produce and other healthy foods.

The bill requires DACS to report annually to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on:

- The projects funded;
- Geographic distribution of projects;
- Program costs; and
- Program outcomes including the number and type of jobs created and health initiatives associated with the program.

To receive program financing, applicants must:

- Demonstrate the capacity to successfully implement the project and the likelihood that the project will be economically self-sustaining;
- Demonstrate the ability to repay the loan; and
- Agree, as an independent grocery store or supermarket, for at least 5 years, to:

¹³ USDA, *Food Access Research Atlas*, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas.aspx> (last visited November 18, 2015).

¹⁴ CDFI Fund, *CDFI Information Mapping System*, <https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/mapping-system.aspx> (last visited November 18, 2015).

- Accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)¹⁵ benefits;
- Apply to accept Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)¹⁶ benefits and accept such benefits if approved;
- Allocate at least 30 percent of food retail space for the sale of perishable foods, which may include fresh or frozen dairy products, fresh produce, and fresh meats, poultry, and fish;
- Comply with all data collection and reporting requirements established by DACS; and
- Promote the hiring of local residents.

The bill provides an exception to the 30 percent minimum requirement for food retail space for corner stores, bodegas, and other non-traditional grocery stores if the funding will be used for refrigeration displays, or other one-time capital expenditures to promote the sale of fresh produce or perishables.

The bill requires DACS or its third-party administrator to determine which projects receive financing by:

- Giving preference to local Florida-based grocers or local business owners with experience in grocery stores and to grocers and business owners with a business plan model that includes written documentation of opportunities to purchase from Florida farmers and growers before seeking out-of-state purchases;
- Considering the level of need in the area to be served;
- Considering the degree to which the project will have a positive economic impact on the underserved community, including the creation or retention of jobs for local residents; and
- Considering other criteria as may be determined by DACS.

The bill authorizes the selected projects to use the financing for:

- Site acquisition and preparation;
- Construction and build-out costs;
- Equipment and furnishings;
- Workforce training or security;
- Predevelopment costs, such as market studies and appraisals;
- Energy-efficiency measures;
- Working capital for first-time inventory and startup costs; and
- Other purposes as may be determined by DACS or its third-party administrator.

Lastly, the bill makes creation and implementation of the program contingent on an appropriation.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Creates the Healthy Food Financing Initiative program.

Section 2. Provides that creation of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative program and implementation of the act is contingent upon appropriation from the Legislature.

Section 3. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2016.

¹⁵ SNAP is a federal program that offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities. USDA, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap> (last visited November 18, 2015).

¹⁶ WIC is a federal program that provides grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. USDA, *Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)*, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic> (last visited November 18, 2015).

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill will negatively impact DACS because the department will need to set up the program and hire staff to coordinate this effort. DACS estimates that it will spend \$68,498 in fiscal year 16-17 to implement the program.¹⁷

In addition, the bill will have an insignificant negative fiscal impact on DACS because the department will need to create rules to implement the program.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

This bill will likely have an indeterminate positive fiscal impact on the private sector because “independent grocery stores and supermarkets” and “community facilities” will be eligible to receive financial assistance in the form of grants and loans to improve or set up stores to provide access to healthy food and fresh produce.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not Applicable. This bill does not appear to affect county or municipal governments.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill requires DACS to adopt rules to administer the program.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

Drafting Issue: Database

The definition of “independent grocery store or supermarket” require such stores not to be owned by a parent corporation who owns more than 40 grocery stores throughout the country based upon

¹⁷ DACS, Agency Analysis of 2016 House Bill 153, p. 3 (October 19, 2015).

ownership conditions as identified in the latest Nielsen Trade Dimensions grocery store database. However, such database does not appear to exist.

Drafting Issue: Eligibility

The bill authorizes DACS to contract with both non-profit organizations and CDFIs to administer the program. The bill sets forth criteria CDFIs must meet to be eligible to contract with DACS. However, non-profit organizations do not have to meet the criteria. It is unclear why this distinction is made.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Not applicable.