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NYS Assembly Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes, Senator Hinchey, and NYS Allies Urge Assembly to Pass the Good Food NY Bill and Governor Hochul to Sign the Good Food NY Bill Into Law

Members of the NYS Legislature and the NYS Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition Rally in Support of Bill Advancing Values Based Food Procurement

New York, NY – June 6, 2024 – Today, Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes was joined by fellow legislators and members of the NY Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition to urge the NYS Assembly to pass the Good Food NY Bill (S.6955A / A.7264A) this legislative session and to call on Governor Hochul to sign this bill into law. Today’s press conference brought together legislators, advocates, and local farmers, and community organizations to celebrate the recent passage of the bill in the NYS Senate under the leadership of prime Senate sponsor Senator Michelle Hinchey. It is imperative that the Assembly follow suit and pass the Good Food NY bill immediately and that Governor Hochul signs the newly passed bill into law following bill passage.

The Good Food NY Bill will create a more transparent food system and transform New York State food procurement law by affording municipal public agencies the option to purchase food based on seven criteria: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued agricultural sector, workers’ rights, health and nutrition, racial equity, and animal welfare.

The Good Food NY Bill would make New York the first state in the country to adopt a values-based food procurement model at the municipal level. Currently, municipalities across New York State are required to choose the lowest cost vendor to supply food for public institutions such as schools, hospitals, senior living centers, homeless shelters, and correctional facilities. The Good Food NY Bill aims to empower communities to instead select vendors that reflect public values like equity, sustainability and ethical labor practices, for example. The bill would also allow preference for Minority and Women-Owned businesses – giving New York State the opportunity to address long-standing biases in public contract negotiations.

The Good Food NY Bill is the result of advocacy by the New York State Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition, a coalition of 70+ local and national food systems advocates led by Community Food Advocates (CFA), a New York City nonprofit that advocates to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to healthy, affordable, and culturally affirming foods.

You can learn more about The Good NY Bill here.

Assembly Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes said, "Access to high quality food at our public institutions is a matter of equity. Providing school districts and municipalities the option to
engage in values-based food procurement is the right public policy and will result in better health, environmental, economic, workforce, and overall societal outcomes for everyone. I am proud to sponsor the Good Food NY bill with Senator Michelle Hinchey, and look forward to it becoming law for the State."

Senator Michelle Hinchey said, "Our purchasing power is one of the strongest powers we have as a society, and our Good Food Bill will help communities across New York harness that influence in their food purchasing decisions, increasing equitable access to good food for all. From school cafeterias to public hospitals and nursing homes, our bill will set New York on a path to lead the country in values-based food procurement that models what we want our food system to be: sustainable, nutritious, equitable, and local. I’m proud we passed our bill in the Senate and grateful to the NYS Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition for their incredible advocacy."

Ribka Getachew, Director of the NY Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition, said, “the Good Food NY bill (S.6955A / A.7264A) democratizes local food decision making and gives New York State municipalities the opportunity to address injustices embedded within our public procurement processes by rewarding the innovative and sustainable practices that local food producers have championed for the past several decades. This 'values-based food procurement' model allows municipalities to center public values and use their public food purchasing from vendors that are working toward a healthier, more equitable, just, local and sustainable food system. We want to thank Assembly Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes and Senator Hinchey on their steadfast commitment to championing the Good Food NY Bill through the Assembly and Senate. We implore that Governor Hochul sign this bill quickly and are excited by the enormous potential the bill has to transform New York State’s local and regional food systems.'

Taylor Pate, Manager of the NYS Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition at Community Food Advocates, said, “New York State’s public agencies have tremendous power to reshape our food systems, which we’ve seen come under immense pressure in the last few years. New York City alone spends half a billion dollars on institutional food and serves 300 million meals annually. When municipalities are given the chance to contract with suppliers that uphold their values, everyone benefits: local food producers, public institutions, and taxpayers. We’re urging the entire NYS Assembly to pass the Good Food NY Bill (S.6955A / A.7264A) this session and for Governor Hochul to sign it into law. It’s time to leverage procurement power to create a more equitable and sustainable food system. We’ve seen the success of this program in cities like Boston and Chicago, and look forward to seeing New York become a leader in implementing Good Food Purchasing at the state level.”

Kate MacKenzie, Executive Director at the NYC Mayor’s Office of Food Policy, said “Through our Good Food Purchasing initiative, we have seen how valuable access to food purchasing data can be. Expanding other municipalities' ability to collect this data will lead to greater transparency in the supply chain and more opportunities to leverage public dollars to support a healthy, sustainable, and equitable food system.”

Rebekah Williams, Co-Founding Director at Food for the Spirit, said, “There is a rich history of local organizing in Buffalo, including the fight for a living wage for workers in public
institutions, and support for local farms and agriculture, environmental sustainability and animal welfare. The Good Food NY bill works to ensure that our public institutions are not only buying local, but that they are supporting urban farms and community gardens, BIPOC-owned farms, Black-owned farms, and supporting those farms to pay their laborers to have living wages and quality jobs. The bill lays the foundation for these measures and more for local municipalities across the state. The investment in equitable food procurement that benefits all people and the planet is overdue.

Jessica Gilbert-Overland, Campaign Consultant and former Campaign Director for the Good Food Buffalo Coalition (GFBC) said, “Our public institutions should be able to prioritize spending tax dollars on food aligned with public values, rather than propping up companies that sell cheap food and are responsible for perpetuating unjust, unsustainable, and inhumane food systems. Passing the Good Food NY Bill is a critical step towards building an equitable, racially just food system in Western New York and across the state because it enables public institutions to choose to buy food that uplifts the health and well-being of our communities, workers, local producers, animals, and environment.”

Joanna Dorsey, Executive Director of Policy & Social Impact, Black Farmers United NYS said, “The passage of the Good Food NY Bill would represent a pivotal step toward creating economic growth and sustainability for BIPOC farmers across New York State. By prioritizing locally grown, value-based, and clean food in our schools, this legislation would not only support the development of resilient, community-centered agricultural businesses but also ensures that our children receive the nutritious and healthy meals they deserve. This initiative will empower our farmers, uplift our communities, and pave the way for a more equitable and sustainable food system for all.”

"The Good Food NY bill creates opportunities for healthier, more sustainably produced foods for municipalities across the state, including schools and hospitals. This is essential because it puts the enormous purchasing power of the government behind environmentally sound practices, such as regenerative agriculture," said Rich Schrader, New York Legislative and Policy Director for NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council). "The bill is a much-needed reform of the state's current purchasing laws that in most cases require public agencies to go with simply the lowest cost bidder, an outdated mandate that undermines the state's climate goals."

Katie Baildon, Policy Manager, Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, said, "Knowing where our food comes from, its nutritional content, and how it was produced helps us make informed decisions about what we choose to eat. But NY's public institutions, which provide millions of meals each year, are restricted by antiquated laws that limit what food they can purchase and serve to their communities. NOFA-NY has strongly supported the Good Food NY bill and its passage would enable public institutions more flexibility in exercising their buying power, for example, by buying produce from local farms. As an organization of organic and regenerative farmers and gardeners, we believe that how our food is produced matters for our health and wellbeing, our environment, and our local economies and that public institutions should be allowed to account for these impacts when making procurement decisions."
Christina Spach, Food Campaigns Director at Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA), said, “Our communities don’t want public agencies to be complicit in worker exploitation that’s rampant in supply chains, but rather be an ally in its eradication. Lifting barriers to prioritize good food providers—like those who respect workers’ rights—in public food contracts provides valuable tools for municipalities, workers, and community partners. The longer we wait for passage of the Good Food NY bill, the more we restrict ourselves in building fair supply chains.”

Craig Willingham, Managing Director at CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute said, “The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute’s mission is to bring about a food system that is just, healthy, and resilient. A food system that does not ignore the root causes of urban food problems like poverty, racism, inequality. The Good Food NY Bill is a huge stride in making this vision a reality. It gives local institutions around New York State the option to choose food vendors based on these values, not just on price. It opens up opportunities for businesses that have been shut out of public contracts for too long. It changes the way we think about food procurement: not as a bureaucratic process, but as a moral choice.”

Kristin Kessler, Project Manager at the City of Kingston Dept. of Health & Wellness, said, "Nestled in the agriculturally rich Hudson Valley, the city of Kingston is a vibrant community surrounded by good food. Yet good food, whether locally or fairly produced and/or nutritionally dense, is not always available to its residents, despite being so close in proximity. Values-based procurement standards are one way the City of Kingston is exploring how the local government might support increasing equitable access to good food for all. Through increased ability to procure food that meets the community’s values, the City is hopeful for an ever more just local food system and healthy Kingston."

Emma Kreyche, Director of Advocacy, Outreach & Education at The Worker Justice Center of New York, said, "The Worker Justice Center of New York celebrates the Senate's passage of the Good Food NY bill and urges the Assembly to do the same before the end of session. Creating an equitable food supply chain starts with the adoption of a values-based procurement model. The legislation allows public institutions to leverage their purchasing power to uphold shared values that serve the greater good, including respect for workers’ rights. By including fair labor practices as a core criteria for value-based procurement, New York has an opportunity to address long-standing inequities in the food system and encourage more ethical practices across the supply chain.”

“The Good Food NY bill provides our state's institutions the opportunity and flexibility to procure higher-welfare animal products, ensuring more of our public dollars are investing in and supporting local farmers who are raising animals more humanely,” said Bill Ketzer, Senior Director of State Legislation for the ASPCA Eastern Division. “We urge the New York State Assembly to pass this groundbreaking legislation to better establish New York as a leader in the country's shift to a more humane and resilient food system and positively impact the welfare of millions of animals.”

“Enacting the Good Food New York bill would remove barriers for municipalities to prioritize nutritious, sustainable, and ethically-sourced foods, rather than prioritizing the lowest cost vendor,” said Amelia Keleher, Policy Associate at the Center for Science in the Public
**Interest.** “To make New York a national leader in the movement for good food purchasing, CSPI urges the Assembly to pass the bill this session so Governor Hochul can sign it into law.”

**Ryan Healy, Advocacy Manager at Feeding NYS,** said, "We know that our food system intersects with some of the major issues of our time. Instead of mandating that public institutions award contracts to the lowest bidder, the Good Food NY bill enables communities to engage in values-based food procurement and leverage their purchasing power for the betterment of our food system. Feeding New York State is encouraged to see this legislation pass the Senate with overwhelming support; we urge the Assembly and Governor to swiftly pass and sign Good Food NY."

**Ashley Ingram, Attorney at Earthjustice,** said, "Industrial agriculture often pollutes our air, water, and climate. Those farmers who operate responsibly are at a financial disadvantage to the polluters. The Good Food NY bill empowers municipalities to use their tremendous buying power to level the playing field and incentivize more farmers to adopt safer, climate-friendly practices. Through values-based procurement, local governments and institutions can help build a better food system for us all. We urge the Assembly to follow the Senate’s lead and pass this bill by the end of the session so that Governor Hochul can sign it into law."

**Francis Yu, Co-Director of Catskills Agrarian Alliance,** said, “Local producers accessing institutional markets are a vital component of a vibrant food system and regional economy. Historically, smaller and marginalized producers, especially Black, Indigenous, and farmers of color, have been excluded from these crucial connections. The Good Food NY Bill represents a significant stride towards implementing more equitable procurement policies. We applaud this policy’s goal to enhance market access and opportunities for local producers, while fostering a more equitable, economically just, and sustainable food system that serves our communities.

**Phoebe Schreiner, Executive Director of Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship (CADE),** said, "In 2021, we convened nearly 500 diverse interest holders across New York State to reimagine what they wanted to see for New York's food system future, as reflected in Vision 2050: A New York State Vision for a Profitable, Regenerative, Equitable, and Healthy Food System Future by 2050. The Good Food NY Bill would be game changing in advancing what folks said they wanted to see--profitable local farms, strong markets for climate-smart food products, families of all income levels able to access nutrient dense local food, and reduced food miles and related greenhouse gas emissions. And the fact that our tax dollars pay for the food in our public institutions, is all the more reason that that food should contribute to New York's farm economy, take care of our communities, and our planet."

“The passing of the Good Food NY Bill is paramount to supporting local food and farmers in NYS,” said **Lisa French, Co-Founder and CEO of Field & Fork Network.** “We have seen firsthand the importance of providing fresh and local food through our experience running the Double Up Food Bucks NY program and the struggle of accessibility and affordability with these foods. This bill will empower NY entities to align their purchasing decisions with their values and make it easier to support New York farms, food, and agriculture.”
Katherine Soll, Founder and CEO of Teens for Food Justice (TFFJ), said, "We strongly urge our New York State officials to take a transformative and innovative step to modernize food procurement and create a more just and sustainable food system for all by passing the Good Food NY bill. At TFFJ, our youth-led movement to build sustainable, healthy food access through high-capacity, school-based hydroponic farming provides thousands of pounds of fresh, affordable food to students and their families each day reducing food insecurity and diet-related disease and building health equity among our communities. Meanwhile, our students are learning cutting edge sustainable growing methods and helping to build a new green economy that will offer new, fair-wage opportunities for future farmers."

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