

1 H.408

2 Introduced by Representative Surprenant of Barnard

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Agriculture; procurement; local food; State agencies

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to provide that it
7 is the State policy to encourage the procurement of local foods by State
8 institutions and State universities and colleges to increase the viability of
9 Vermont farms and food businesses. The bill would provide that a State
10 institution or a State university or college purchasing food shall provide a
11 preference to local foods when local foods are comparable in costs to foods
12 that have not been grown or produced in the State. The bill would require a
13 person responsible for procuring food or other items on behalf of a State
14 institution or a State university or college to purchase local foods unless the
15 price of local goods exceeds by more than 10 percent the price of food or other
16 agricultural products grown or produced that were not grown or produced
17 within Vermont.

18 An act relating to State purchasing of local food

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

3 The General Assembly finds that:

4 (1) Vermont recognizes the importance of local production and supply
5 as a means to empower communities, strengthen local economies, and ensure
6 access to healthy, locally produced foods;

7 (2) institutional purchasing from Vermont farms can significantly
8 bolster the State’s agricultural sector, support sustainable farming practices,
9 and promote economic resilience; and

10 (3) the State should support Vermont farms and the farming economy by
11 giving preference to local foods in the purchasing by State agencies, State
12 universities, and State colleges.

13 Sec. 2. 29 V.S.A. chapter 49, subchapter 3 is added to read:

14 Subchapter 3. State Purchasing of Food

15 § 941. DEFINITIONS

16 As used in this subchapter:

17 (1) “Local food” has the same meaning as “local,” “local to Vermont,”
18 and “locally grown or made in Vermont” as in 9 V.S.A. § 2465a.

19 (2) “State agency” means any Executive Branch agency, department, or
20 entity created by Title 3 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated and any board,

1 commission, council, or similar entity attached to an Executive Branch agency,
2 department, or entity.

3 (3) “State universities and colleges” means the University of Vermont
4 and the Vermont State Colleges.

5 (4) “State institution” means any State agency, any office of the State
6 judiciary, and any office of the General Assembly.

7 § 942. STATE POLICY

8 It is the policy of the State to encourage the procurement of local foods by
9 State institutions and State universities and colleges to increase the viability of
10 Vermont farms and food businesses, thus making a positive contribution to the
11 State’s economy and enhancing food self-sufficiency for Vermont.

12 § 943. PREFERENCE FOR LOCAL FOOD

13 (a) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, and to the extent permitted by
14 federal law, a State institution or a State university or college purchasing food
15 shall provide a preference to local foods when local foods are comparable in
16 costs to foods that have not been grown or produced in the State.

17 (b) The person responsible for procuring food or other items on behalf of a
18 State institution or a State university or college shall purchase local foods
19 unless the price of local goods exceeds by more than 10 percent the price of
20 food or other agricultural products grown or produced that were not grown or
21 produced within Vermont.

1 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 1266 is added to read:

2 § 1266. FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT COMPANY BIDS

3 When a food service management company or other food supplier submits a
4 bid to a supervisory union, supervisory district, school board, or school in
5 response to a request for a proposal or bid solicitation to supply a school
6 nutrition program, the food service management company or food supplier
7 shall include in their bid information related to how the food service
8 management company or food supplier can supply a supervisory union,
9 supervisory district, school board, or school with locally produced foods that
10 would allow the supervisory union, supervisory district, school board, or
11 school to qualify for a local foods incentive grant under section 1264a of this
12 title.

13 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

14 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.