

STATE OF MAINE

 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND NINETEEN

 H.P. 848 - L.D. 1159
Resolve, To End Hunger in Maine by 2030

Preamble. Whereas, the Legislature finds that, for the economic and social well-being of the people of the State, all people must be free from hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition, starvation or endangerment of life from scarcity of or lack of access to nourishing and culturally appropriate food; and

Whereas, the human, social and economic costs of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition to the State are enormous and far reaching, leading to lost productivity, health-related problems, reduced well-being, decreased learning ability, reduced fulfilment of human potential and social and political unrest that undermines development efforts; and

Whereas, one in 4 children in Maine goes to bed hungry every night, 37% of the Maine people who face hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition do not qualify for any public assistance and Maine ranks first in New England and 9th in the nation for food insecurity; and

Whereas, many emergency food relief sites in the State regularly lack fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutrient-dense foods for residents struggling with hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition; and

Whereas, for the consumer, producer and the environment, the cost of food produced by and for the global industrial food system has risen in the last decade; and

Whereas, 90% of the food Maine people consume is imported from elsewhere; and

Whereas, Maine has all the natural resources and hard-working, self-reliant people to grow, catch, harvest and process enough food to reduce imports and provide the people of the State with a diet based more on Maine-produced foods and yet state food policy to date has not significantly reduced hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition for the people of the State; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Plan to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in the State. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, in

consultation and collaboration with interested parties and stakeholders, including, but not limited to, statewide and community-based advocacy and emergency food relief organizations and nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, private foundations, interfaith religious councils, farmers, persons who fish commercially, food producers, state and local granges, civic organizations, regional, local and community food policy councils and people who struggle with hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition, shall collaborate with the Department of Marine Resources, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to eliminate hunger in the State by 2030. The strategic plan designed under this resolve must at least:

1. Use existing programs, staff and resources to the extent possible;
2. Define and articulate the scope of the food and nutrition situation in the State, including accurate data and information related to the contribution of relevant sectors on nutrition, food consumption and production, food distribution systems, household incomes and other relevant demographic data, in order to address the multiple dimensions of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
3. Include any recommendations of legislative commissions, task forces, working groups or studies on ending hunger for any targeted population that will prove effective for the general population;
4. Determine any disproportionate impact of hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition on people living in food deserts across the State and include proposals to close those gaps more quickly as the State moves toward eradicating hunger;
5. Determine the barriers to access to healthy and culturally appropriate food and include proposals to eliminate those barriers for persons who struggle with intergenerational hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition and for persons who struggle with intermittent hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition;
6. Balance supply-side policies and solutions such as increasing agricultural productivity and accessing markets, investing in family farms, small-scale fisheries and forestry and fostering governance of land tenure and natural resources with policies and solutions that promote food self-sufficiency, including hunting, foraging and the policies outlined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, section 219;
7. Establish benchmarks and measurable outcomes based on sound evidence and analysis to monitor progress, assess impacts and interpret outcomes in order to ensure that actions bring the State closer to eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by 2030; and
8. Identify and propose adequate resource allocation in order to translate policies, programs and legislation into concrete action.

Sec. 2. Initial design commencement. Resolved: That, no later than 30 days after the effective date of this resolve, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall begin inviting interested parties, stakeholders and the departments outlined under section 1 to convene the first planning session.

Sec. 3. Initial design report. Resolved: That, by February 10, 2020, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry detailing the initial design for the plan under section 1. The committee is authorized to submit legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature.