

House Bill 996

By: Representatives Berry of the 56th, Dawson of the 65th, Barnes of the 86th, Schofield of the 63rd, and O'Steen of the 169th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 Department of Agriculture, so as to require annual reporting by such department regarding
3 food deserts in this state; to provide for definitions; to provide for related matters; to provide
4 for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

7 Chapter 2 of Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department
8 of Agriculture, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

9 "2-2-14.

10 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

11 (1) 'Farmers' market' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 2-10-52.

12 (2) 'Food desert' means an area with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent where at least

13 one-third of the population lives more than one mile away from a retail food store or

14 farmers' market, which results in the population of such area having low access to fresh

15 fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods.

16 (3) 'Retail food store' means a food store that has reported at least \$2 million in annual
17 sales and contains all the major food departments found in a traditional supermarket or
18 large grocery store, including, but not limited to, fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh meat
19 and poultry, dairy, dry and packaged foods, and frozen foods.

20 (b) Beginning October 31, 2026, and no later than October 31 of each year thereafter, the
21 department, in coordination with the Division of Family and Children Services of the
22 Department of Human Services, shall prepare and submit to the General Assembly an
23 annual report:

24 (1) Identifying the locations of food deserts within this state;

25 (2) Providing information about health issues associated with such food deserts; and

26 (3) Outlining recommendations on reducing the number and size of such food deserts.

27 (c) An annual report containing information derived, whether in whole or in part, from
28 material disseminated by the federal government addressing any of the reporting
29 requirements outlined in paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of subsection (b) of this Code section
30 shall satisfy the respective reporting requirement or requirements."

31 **SECTION 2.**

32 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
33 without such approval.

34 **SECTION 3.**

35 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.