

## RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

**HB 670**

**2024 Regular Session**

**Jordan**

Present law specifies that to the extent funds are available, the Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry, in cooperation with other partners, must establish a financing program that provides grants and loans to eligible healthy food retailers to increase access to healthy food in underserved communities.

Proposed law would have removed the available funds exception for the financing program but would have otherwise retained present law.

Present law provides that program funding must be on a competitive, one-time basis as appropriate for the eligible project.

Proposed law would have permitted an eligible project to qualify for program funding more than once.

(Proposed to amend R.S. 3:296(D)(1), (3), and (4)(b)(intro. para.))

VETO MESSAGE: "House Bill 670 changes the current Healthy Food Retail Act to mandate that the Louisiana Department of Agriculture contract with qualified nonprofit organizations. House Bill 670 creates an unfunded mandate by eliminating the contingent language in R.S. 3:296 that provides the program is only "to the extent that funding is available."

The Legislative Fiscal Office noted that this program was previously funded by federal grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. However, as noted by the Legislative Fiscal Office, this funding is no longer available as of September of 2023 and there is currently no appropriation by the Legislature for this program.

Retaining the current law still allows the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to provide funding for this program should funding become available.

For these reasons, House Bill 670 will not become law."