

## RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

**SB 287**

**2024 Regular Session**

**Duplessis**

Present law requires that, to the extent funds are available, the La. Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry, in cooperation with public and private sector partners, establish a financing program that provides grants and loans to healthy food retailers that increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other affordable healthy food in underserved communities.

Proposed law would have retained present law but would have deleted the language "to the extent funds are available".

Present law allows the department to contract with one or more qualified nonprofit organizations or community development financial institutions to administer the program through a public-private partnership, raise matching funds, market the program statewide, evaluate applicants, make award decisions, underwrite loans, and monitor compliance and impact.

Proposed law would have required the department to contract with qualified nonprofit organizations or community development financial institutions.

Present law provides that the program must provide funding on a competitive, one-time basis for eligible projects.

Proposed law would have deleted the language "one-time basis" and would have required the program to provide funding on a competitive basis.

Would have become effective August 1, 2024.

(Proposed to amend R.S. 3:296(D)(1), (2), and (3))

### **VETO MESSAGE:**

"Please be advised that I have vetoed Senate Bill 287 of the 2024 Regular Session. Senate Bill 287 changes the current Healthy Food Retail Act to mandate that the Louisiana Department of Agriculture contract with qualified nonprofit organizations. Senate Bill 287 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."

In an almost identical bill, House Bill 670 of the 2024 Regular Session by Representative Edmond Jordan, 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, Senate Bill 287 will not become law."