

CHAPTER 136

AN ACT concerning the reduction of food waste and supplementing Title 13 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.13:1E-226 Findings, declarations relative to food waste.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that food waste is a major issue in the United States and globally; that, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), unwanted and discarded food squanders resources, including water, land, energy, labor, and capital, and, when food waste is dumped in a landfill, it rots and creates methane, which is a powerful greenhouse gas; that the FAO has estimated that one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption – about 1.3 billion tons – is lost or wasted every year, and the food loss and waste in industrialized countries equates to a value of approximately \$680 billion; that the FAO has also stated that if one fourth of the food lost or wasted globally could be saved, it would be enough to feed 870 million hungry people; that the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic has estimated that 40 percent of the food supply in the United States is not eaten; that, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Department of Agriculture, food loss and waste is the single largest component of disposed municipal solid waste in the United States; in 2015, that the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture announced a national goal of reducing food waste by 50 percent by the year 2030; that much more can and must be done in the food supply chain to reduce the incredible waste of such a precious resource; that New Jersey is a national leader in implementing effective recycling and solid waste reduction programs, and thus it is appropriate for the State to also be among the national leaders in developing and implementing a Statewide food waste reduction program; and that, therefore, it is appropriate and fitting, as well as a moral imperative, that the State seek to reduce food waste as much as possible in New Jersey, and that reducing food waste in the State by 50 percent by the year 2030 is a worthy goal to pursue with vigor and all due speed.

C.13:1E-227 Goal of reducing amount of food waste established.

2. a. There is established for the State a goal of reducing, by the year 2030, the amount of food waste generated annually in the State by 50 percent of that amount which is generated in the year this act takes effect.

b. (1) Within one year after the effective date of this act, the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, shall develop and commence implementation of a plan to accomplish the State food waste reduction goal established by subsection a. of this section. The Department of Environmental Protection shall hold at least three public hearings during the development of the plan to seek public input thereon. The departments may also consult and coordinate with other governmental entities and private, nonprofit, or charitable associations, organizations, or businesses, such as those in the agricultural, grocery, restaurant, food manufacturer, food supply, food bank, food pantry, and healthcare sectors of the food industry, in developing and implementing the plan.

(2) As part of the plan, the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, shall make such recommendations for any administrative or legislative action deemed necessary to further progress toward achieving the State food waste reduction goal, which shall be transmitted to the Legislature in accordance with the requirements of section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) and to the chairpersons of the

Senate Environment and Energy Committee, the Senate Economic Growth Committee, the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee, and the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, or their respective successors.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved July 21, 2017.