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LAWS OF NEW YORK, 2020

CHAPTER 316

AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law, in relation to establishing a New York food supply working group

Became a law December 2, 2020, with the approval of the Governor.

Passed by a majority vote, three-fifths being present.

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 16 of the agriculture and markets law is amended by adding a new subdivision 51 to read as follows:

51. (a) Establish, in coordination with the commissioner of economic development, a New York food supply working group to provide advice, guidance, and recommendations on improving the resiliency and self-reliance of the state's farm and food supply and the related supply chain logistics to address food shortages, food waste, and the inability to get New York farm goods to markets that occurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the goal of creating permanent solutions beyond the state of emergency to reflect the changing wholesale, retail and consumer marketplace.

(b) The commissioners shall work with the food supply working group which shall include, but not be limited to, representatives, including small and family-owned businesses, of:

(i) farmers;

(ii) food processors including, but not limited to, dairy, produce, meat, and beverage processors;

(iii) retail food businesses including, but not limited to, retail food stores and direct farm-to-consumer businesses;

(iv) the food service industry including, but not limited to, restaurants and institutional foodservice;

(v) food wholesalers and distributors;

(vi) food transporters including, but not limited to, direct-to-consumer transporters serving retail food stores, foodservice, and farmers;

(vii) labor organizations and workers from the farm and food industry;

(viii) emergency food providers including, but not limited to, foodbanks;

(ix) academic experts in food production, marketing, distribution, food safety, and consumers;

(x) federal agencies with responsibility for food production, processing, marketing, and safety; and

(xi) any other representatives of agriculture, the food industry, economic development, or any other state agencies the commissioners of agriculture and markets and of economic development deem necessary.

(c) The working group shall convene on or before May first, two thousand twenty-one, for the purpose of roundtable meetings which may be held in different regions of the state. The agenda and meeting information shall be made available to the public in advance and all such meetings shall be open to, or accessible to, the public. Such meetings may include, among other things, consideration of the following issues, especially as they relate to state or federal emergencies:

(i) the need to strengthen the resiliency and self-reliance of the state's farm and food supply and related supply chain logistics, to prevent food shortages and food waste, and to overcome hurdles involved in getting agricultural products to markets and consumers; and

(ii) the need for changes to, and development of, new state and federal laws, rules, policies, and programs to address, and provide incentives for, the goal of strengthening and improving the state food supply in a manner that benefits New York farms, businesses, workers, and consumers.

(d) The working group shall provide a written report of its findings identifying any proposed recommendations and guidance to the governor, the speaker of the assembly, and the temporary president of the senate on or before December first, two thousand twenty-one, and shall publish such report on the department's website.

Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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