



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Senate Majority To Pass FRESH Communities Act To Combat Food Deserts Across New York State

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 3, 2019

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Albany, NY- The Senate Democratic Majority today will pass legislation to enact the Food Retail Establishment Subsidization for Healthy communities (FRESH) Act. The bill, sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy, will provide financial assistance to businesses, municipalities, not-for-profits corporations or local developments corporation in order to attract and retain food retail establishments in underserved areas.

“Access to fresh produce and healthy food options should be a basic right for all New Yorkers,” Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “Unfortunately, far too many New Yorkers are still denied this basic right and instead live in urban or rural ‘food deserts.’ This legislation, sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy, will help address this problem and empower companies, local governments, and not-for-profits to step up and take action to meet New Yorkers’ basic nutritional needs.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Tim Kennedy said, “All New Yorkers deserve access to fresh foods, regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status, yet food deserts persist in underserved communities statewide. Through the Food Retail Establishment Subsidization for Healthy Communities (FRESH) Act, we're incentivizing opportunities for supermarkets to put down roots in urban and rural areas that currently lack sufficient access to healthy food, and

require them to not only provide nutritional food options, but jobs opportunities for the surrounding communities they choose to invest in as well.”

Senate Bill, S.584 will:

Enact the food retail establishment subsidization for healthy communities (FRESH Communities) act

Authorize Empire State Development to provide loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies and grants to businesses, municipalities, not-for-profit corporation or local development corporations to attract, maintain, or permit the expansion of food retail establishments in underserved areas

Define “underserved areas” to be areas with low-moderate income census tracts, areas below average supermarket density, have supermarkets with a customer base more than fifty percent considered to be low-income and other areas demonstrated to have significant access limitations due to travel distance

Define “food retail establishments” as supermarkets and other grocery retailers that operate on a self-service basis and sell a minimum percentage of produce, meat, poultry, seafood, baked good and/or dairy products, participate in the pride of New York Programs, accept SNAP and WIC benefits, do not charge membership fees and hire local residents from within a 20-mile radius.