

# HB 996 – Require Annual Reporting on Food Deserts

## Legislative Rubric from Science for Georgia

[HB 996](#) - Require an annual report identifying Georgia food deserts, as well as associated health issues and possible solutions to improve access to fresh foods.

Criteria	Variables			
<b>Impact</b> <b>Who is going to be impacted? Is it equitable? List stakeholders &amp; opinions.</b>	Negative		Positive	
	This bill would require the Georgia Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Division of Family and Children Services, to release an annual report identifying food desert locations and associated health issues throughout the state of Georgia, as well as recommendations to reduce the number and size of the food deserts. Annual reports may help bring attention to the millions of Georgians living in food deserts. There are no articles discussing stakeholder opinions at this time.			
<b>Reach</b> <b>Does it reach its target audience?</b>	0 - No impact on target audience.	1 - Impacts narrow segment.	<b>2 - Impacts Majority; Exceptions</b>	3 - Impacts entire target audience
	This bill has the potential to routinely spotlight the changing and ongoing trends regarding food access throughout Georgia, highlighting year-to-year what regions may benefit from legislative assistance. There is no guarantee the annual report(s) will lead to substantial changes in food access, only that data is compiled and presented to the General Assembly.			
<b>Scientific Merit</b> <b>Does it utilize scientific research accurately?</b>	<b>YES - this does follow scientific research accurately. Here's why....</b>		NO - this does not present scientific research accurately.	
	The criteria outlined for 'food desert' in this bill aligns with the metrics used by the <a href="#">USDA</a> to calculate such regions. As of 2023, <a href="#">14.9% of Georgians</a> face food insecurity, or " <a href="#">limited or uncertain access to adequate food.</a> " While access to food can be limited by physical distance to grocery stores, <a href="#">personal finances and food prices</a> often determine how much and what kind of food people can afford to eat. <a href="#">Food insecurity can affect</a> physical and mental health and well-being, leading to chronic conditions like diabetes or depression and affecting performance at work and school.			
<b>Financial Feasibility</b> <b>Is it financially feasible? or does this have burdensome finances (higher taxes, future costs, etc)?</b>	0 - Extremely high costs	1 - Expensive but can be done	<b>2 - Slight</b>	3 - No financial burden
	Data collection may require more work hours put in by state employees, but, per the bill, data from federal reports may be used in part or in full to fulfill annual report requirements. This would lessen the burden of data collection on state employees.			

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<p><b>Political Feasibility</b>  <b>Level of opposition</b>  <b>and partisan</b>  <b>disagreement.</b></p>	<p>0 - Majority disagreed, regardless of party.</p>	<p>1 – Split along party lines</p>	<p>2 - Minimal Opposition</p>	<p>3 - Complete consensus (zero to five 'Nays').</p>
<p>No votes. This bill was been assigned to the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs committee. There are 5 sponsors, 4 democrats and 1 republican.</p>				
<p><b>Measurable Metrics?</b>  <b>We recommend</b>  <b>looking at these 3</b>  <b>metrics. Is the data</b>  <b>available or being</b>  <b>measured?</b></p>	<p>0 - no data</p>	<p><b>1 - some data / not accessible</b></p>	<p>2 - most data / somewhat accessible</p>	<p>3 - complete transparency</p>
<p>The State of Georgia does not currently produce routine, publicly available reports on food deserts. External organizations do track this data, but yearly updates are not guaranteed. Some examples include <a href="#">Reinvestment Fund's Limited Supermarket Access (LSA) Analysis</a> and the <a href="#">USDA's Food Access Research Atlas</a>. Their most recent data is from 2022 and 2019, respectively.</p>				