

HB 420 -- FOOD DESERTS ACT

SPONSOR: Peters

This bill enacts the "Food Deserts Act of 2017." Accordingly, the Food Desert Fund is established, composed of appropriated moneys by the General Assembly and the repayments from loans granted under the act. The Department of Economic Development shall create an application process, and provide loans, using the Food Desert Fund, to future or existing grocery stores that provide healthful foods at below city average prices. Loans so distributed may only be used to open a grocery store in an underserved community, support an existing grocery store's operation in an underserved community, facilitate the fair market value purchase of an existing grocery store in an underserved community, or support a program participant's operations in a community that would become underserved if the program participant was not located in the community. Loan applications for grocery stores that hire or plan to hire workers residing in the applicable underserved community, provide or plan to provide healthy diet educational opportunities, source or plan to source their food from local urban farms and gardens, or do not or will not sell alcohol or tobacco products will receive priority. The act shall sunset six years from its enactment unless it is reauthorized.