

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2886  
By: González, Jessica  
Agriculture & Livestock  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one in eight individuals in Texas experiences food insecurity and 58 Texas counties are identified as food deserts. During the 87th Regular Session, a rider was passed on the General Appropriations Act to study food access in Texas. Establishing a food systems office was strongly recommended by the Department of Agriculture (TDA) as a simple and effective way to address food insecurity for Texas residents. Research has shown that food insecurity leads to many negative outcomes for young children and adults. Lack of access to healthy food may cause delayed development in children, an increased likelihood of heart disease, and behavioral problems. C.S.H.B. 2886 seeks to promote food security for Texans by establishing an office of food system security and resiliency as a division within TDA.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 2886 amends the Agriculture Code to establish the office of food system security and resiliency as a division within the Department of Agriculture. The bill establishes that the office is responsible for food system security and resiliency in Texas including the following:

- coordinating state resources and programs so food access industry professionals can efficiently use resources to meet the needs of Texas;
- ensuring a food system in Texas that is free of disruption;
- promoting the growth, manufacture, and processing of agricultural products in Texas for farm-to-store and farm-to-table consumption;
- developing regional food system security and resiliency planning by working with other state agencies, counties, municipalities, school districts, and local governments; and
- promoting policies to establish more localized food markets and food access points through measures such as:
  - connecting retailers, distributors, municipalities, counties, school districts, and other local governments to local producers; and
  - collaborating with local stakeholders to expand food access across Texas.

C.S.H.B. 2886 requires the office, not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year, to make recommendations to the legislature for legislation that may improve food system security and resiliency in Texas. The bill requires the office, if the Texas food system security and

resiliency planning council is established by an act of the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, to manage that council and coordinate with that council to implement the bill's provisions relating to promoting policies to establish more localized food markets or food access points.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.

### **COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 2886 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Whereas the introduced established the food systems office as an office within the Department of Agriculture (TDA), the substitute establishes the office of food system security and resiliency as a division within TDA.

Accordingly, the substitute omits the requirements from the introduced for the food systems office to develop programs that support food access and food security and for the food office to encourage and coordinate food security planning in Texas for the following:

- establishing more localized food markets through measures such as connecting local schools, retailers, and distributors to local producers and collaborating with local stakeholders to expand food delivery areas and providing buying support to small retailers;
- creating streamlined and consolidated application processes for multiple programs through a clearinghouse for public assistance programs, farmer and distribution support programs, opportunities for retail development, and food access business development information and resources;
- establishing a communication network of local, state, federal non-governmental, and for-profit entities and programs operating in and relating to the food system in Texas;
- assisting farmers in contributing to food security such as by developing and providing information and resources regarding local food production and food markets;
- collecting and monitoring information, such as local poverty rates and measures of food access, to identify food deserts and other communities or populations experiencing food insecurity and to assist and coordinate applications for relevant federal and state benefits; and
- focusing on community empowerment and resiliency to ensure the office is providing individuals with food access support.

The substitute includes provisions absent from the introduced establishing that the office of food system security and resiliency is responsible for food system security and resiliency in Texas, including the following:

- coordinating state resources and programs so food access industry professionals can efficiently use resources to meet the needs of Texas;
- ensuring a food system in this state that is free of disruption;
- promoting the growth, manufacture, and processing of agricultural products in this state for farm-to-store and farm-to-table consumption;
- developing regional food system security and resiliency planning by working with other state agencies, counties, municipalities, school districts, and local governments; and
- promoting policies to establish more localized food markets or food access points through measures such as connecting retailers, distributors, municipalities, counties, school districts, and other local governments to local producers and collaborating with local stakeholders to expand food access across Texas.

The substitute includes the following provisions that were absent from the introduced:

- a requirement for the office, not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year, to make recommendations to the legislature for legislation that may improve food system security and resiliency in Texas; and
- a requirement for the office, if the Texas food system security and resiliency planning council is established by an act of the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, to manage that council and coordinate with that council to implement the bill's provisions relating to promoting policies to establish more localized food markets or food access points.