

2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE BILL NO. 610

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled January 13, 2026

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 2.2 a chapter numbered 55.7, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-5518 through 2.2-5522, relating to Commonwealth Food Security and Coordination Act established.

Patron—Anthony

Committee Referral Pending

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 2.2 a chapter numbered 55.7, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-5518 through 2.2-5522, as follows:

CHAPTER 55.7.

COMMONWEALTH FOOD SECURITY AND COORDINATION ACT.

§ 2.2-5518. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Act" means the Commonwealth Food Security and Coordination Act.

"Department" means the Department of Social Services.

"Participating agencies" means the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Department of Emergency Management.

§ 2.2-5519. Department of Social Services and participating agencies to work together.

The Department of Social Services and participating agencies shall work together to coordinate state-level food security responses during federal nutrition benefit interruptions, natural disasters, and other emergencies affecting household food access.

§ 2.2-5520. State lead agency's duties.

To facilitate the implementation of an early intervention services system and to ensure compliance with federal requirements, the Governor shall appoint the Department to act as state lead agency. The duties of the Department shall include:

1. Establishing a plan for coordinated emergency food-access operations. Such plan shall include food banks, community-based nonprofit food providers, mutual-aid organizations, faith-based organizations, community kitchens, and community gardens and other entities approved by the Department;

2. Developing and maintaining memoranda of understanding with participating agencies, and participating nonprofit partners to support logistics, procurement, and distribution of emergency food resources;

3. Identifying areas of need utilizing (i) the Commonwealth Food Mapping and Access Equity Tool, when operational, or (ii) other statewide food-access datasets maintained by the Commonwealth;

4. Activating emergency food-access operations within 24 to 72 hours upon request from a locality or upon a determination by the Department that an emergency exists;

5. Establishing guardrails to promote equitable access to emergency food resources across geographic areas and prevent retailer-level concentration of emergency distribution;

6. Providing public guidance to households and localities regarding available emergency food resources and activation procedures;

7. Coordinating with local departments of social services to support implementation of emergency food-access operations; and

8. Submitting a report to the Governor and the General Assembly within 120 days following any activation of the Act during the preceding calendar year, summarizing emergency activations, geographic areas served, distribution partners utilized, and data sources relied upon.

§ 2.2-5521. Duties of participating agencies.

The participating agencies shall:

1. Provide technical assistance, logistics support, and emergency operations coordination at the request of the Department;

2. Assist in transportation, warehousing, and procurement flexibilities during declared emergencies; and

3. Support communication and coordination with local emergency management offices.

§ 2.2-5522. Funding.

The Program may be supported by unappropriated general funds, federal relief funds, or other funds as appropriated by the General Assembly. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to authorize use of the Revenue Stabilization Fund or any other constitutionally restricted reserve.

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