

Resolution 8: Local Food Infrastructure and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

Sponsored by Rep. Sonya Harper, Illinois

Local Food Infrastructure and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

WHEREAS, Black women legislators and leaders have long fought for policies that ensure equity in food access, agricultural opportunity, and economic empowerment in communities that have historically been excluded from full participation in food and farming systems; and

WHEREAS, socially disadvantaged farmers, including Black, Indigenous, and other farmers of color, have faced systemic barriers in accessing land, capital, infrastructure, and markets, resulting in limited ability to scale production and contribute fully to local food systems; and

WHEREAS, communities across the nation continue to experience food deserts and food apartheid, where structural racism and disinvestment have created inequitable access to affordable, healthy, and culturally relevant food; and

WHEREAS, investment in local food infrastructure; including food hubs, aggregation and distribution centers, farmers markets, community kitchens, cold storage facilities, and cooperatives, strengthens local economies, increases farmer capacity and provides fresh, healthy foods directly to underserved neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, building and sustaining strong local food systems reduces dependence on long supply chains, strengthens resilience in times of crisis, and advances public health, food sovereignty, and racial equity;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women) calls upon federal, state, and local governments to prioritize investment in local food infrastructure projects that directly support socially disadvantaged farmers and address inequities in food access; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOBEL Women urges the U.S. Congress and state legislatures to increase funding for programs within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other relevant agencies that expand opportunities for minority, women, and socially disadvantaged farmers, including but not limited to: the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP), Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan programs, the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI), and USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOBEL Women supports the establishment of state and regional food financing funds, public-private partnerships, and cooperative ownership models to empower socially disadvantaged farmers to own and control more of the food supply chain; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOBEL Women commits to advancing legislation, resolutions, and advocacy that uplift the voices of socially disadvantaged farmers, dismantle systemic inequities in agriculture, and end food deserts and food apartheid in Black, rural, and urban communities alike.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be submitted to appropriate federal and state policymakers, national agricultural organizations, and community-based food justice advocates for adoption, collaboration, and implementation.

Submitted by Rep. Sonya Marie Harper