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# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF QUÉBEC

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THIRD SESSION

FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE

Bill 690

**An Act respecting the right to food**

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**Introduction**

**Introduced by  
Mr. Etienne Grandmont  
Member for Taschereau**

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## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

*The purpose of this bill is to recognize, promote and protect the right to food to ensure that every person has access to quality food in sufficient quantity.*

*The measures provided for by this bill are aimed at establishing a framework to guide government action and the initiatives of Québec society in the implementation of the right to food.*

*To that end, the bill sets out the principles guiding the implementation of the right to food and requires the Government to take measures to ensure the realization of that right and to ensure its protection.*

*The bill establishes the Comité national sur le droit à l'alimentation, which will have the functions of advising the Government on various aspects related to the right to food and monitoring the progression of that right in Québec.*

*Lastly, the bill amends the Charter of human rights and freedoms to include the right of every person to have physical and economic access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food corresponding to their needs and dietary choices.*

## **LEGISLATION AMENDED BY THIS BILL:**

- Charter of human rights and freedoms (chapter C-12).

# **Bill 690**

## **AN ACT RESPECTING THE RIGHT TO FOOD**

AS everyone should be free from hunger;

AS food insecurity is a reality for many persons, especially the most vulnerable;

AS the right to food is recognized by the international community;

AS Québec has declared itself bound by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognizes the right to food;

AS the Charter of human rights and freedoms provides that every person in need has a right, for himself and his family, to measures of financial assistance and to social measures susceptible of ensuring such person an acceptable standard of living;

AS there is a need to ensure that every person has a dignified life as regards food through access to food that is adequate and sufficient in quantity and quality;

**THE PARLIAMENT OF QUÉBEC ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **PURPOSE**

**1.** The purpose of this Act is to recognize, promote and protect the right to food in order to ensure that every person has access to quality food in sufficient quantity.

The measures provided for by this Act are aimed at establishing a framework to guide government action and the initiatives of Québec society in the implementation of the right to food.

For the purposes of this Act, “right to food” means the right of every person to have physical and economic access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food corresponding to their needs and dietary choices.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **RIGHT TO FOOD**

**2.** Every person is the holder of the right to food.

**3.** The following principles guide the implementation of the right to food:

(1) full and effective participation of the population and society stakeholders in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring processes that may affect the right to food;

(2) protection of the dignity of persons and fighting against prejudices;

(3) non-discrimination, in that access to food must be universal and equitable and that the measures must be aimed at correcting discrimination or eliminating the factors that cause discrimination or contribute to perpetuating it;

(4) transparency, in that every person must have access to recent and dependable information on the decisions and follow-up on actions to implement the right to food;

(5) empowerment, in that every person must have access to the means, information and education necessary to enable them to have the capacity to assert their right to food; and

(6) responsibility and accountability, in that the Government must ensure that the measures put in place are aimed at recognizing and respecting the right to food.

**4.** The Government is required to take measures to

(1) ensure the realization of the right to food;

(2) protect the right to food;

(3) maintain the conditions that enable every person to freely and permanently enjoy the right to food;

(4) prevent any person from interfering with the right to food;

(5) ensure that every person has sufficient income enabling them to procure food to satisfy their hunger;

(6) promote the preservation of the population's health and well-being by disseminating information on healthy nutrition;

(7) inform the population of the right to food, in particular by establishing a simple and accessible procedure enabling any person to ask for relevant information for the exercise of that right;

- (8) guarantee access to adequate food at school;
- (9) ensure the autonomy and sustainability of the Québec food system, in particular to reduce dependence on imports;
- (10) improve methods of food production, conservation and distribution;
- (11) facilitate partnerships with bodies and enterprises to promote the putting in place of solutions adapted to the needs of the population;
- (12) reduce food waste; and
- (13) reduce geographic and social inequalities as regards access to food distribution points.

To that end, the Government takes into account the opinions and recommendations made by the Comité national sur le droit à l'alimentation.

**5.** Before making any decision, the Government assesses the impacts, in particular the economic and social impacts, on the right to food. Where a decision is likely to have adverse effects, the Government sees to it that they are mitigated.

**6.** The Government may delegate to the Comité national sur le droit à l'alimentation all or part of the functions assigned to it under subparagraphs 6 and 7 of the first paragraph of section 4 and section 5.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **COMITÉ NATIONAL SUR LE DROIT À L'ALIMENTATION**

**7.** The Comité national sur le droit à l'alimentation (the Committee) is established.

**8.** The function of the Committee is to advise the Government on various aspects related to the right to food.

To that end, the Committee must, in particular,

- (1) collect information relevant to the realization of the right to food;
- (2) establish the list of the categories of the most vulnerable persons with regard to food;
- (3) collect and circulate data related to the access to healthy food in sufficient quantity;
- (4) propose measures to support every person who facilitates access to food for vulnerable persons;

(5) identify gaps in the implementation or respect of the right to food and propose measures to address them;

(6) give any opinion or make any recommendation that it considers necessary; and

(7) give its opinion on any matter within its jurisdiction submitted to it by the Government.

**9.** A further function of the Committee is to monitor the evolution of the right to food in Québec. It must, at least every three years, see to the drafting of a report that mentions that evolution, which must, in particular, cover the implementation of that right by the Government.

The Committee makes the content of that report public by any means it considers appropriate.

**10.** The Committee is composed of the following members, appointed by the Government:

(1) one chair;

(2) three persons representing community organizations, including at least one food aid body;

(3) one person representing the First Nations and the Inuit;

(4) one person representing the education sector;

(5) one person representing the public health sector;

(6) one person representing the agri-food sector;

(7) one person representing food retailers;

(8) one person representing the municipal sector; and

(9) one person who is a member of the Ordre professionnel des diététistes-nutritionnistes du Québec.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services and the Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity are members of the Committee by virtue of office, but are not entitled to vote.

**11.** The term of office of members of the Committee appointed by the Government is not more than five years.

On the expiry of their term, the members remain in office until replaced or reappointed.

**12.** The chair directs the activities of the Committee and coordinates its work; the chair ensures co-operation between the Committee and the Government.

The Government fixes the fees, allowances or salary of the chair, whose time must be devoted exclusively to the work of the Committee and the duties of the office.

Where the chair is absent or unable to act, the other members of the Committee referred to in the first paragraph of section 10 designate from among themselves one member to replace the chair.

**13.** The members of the Committee other than the chair and those mentioned in the second paragraph of section 10 are indemnified for their expenses in attending the sittings of the Committee and receive an attendance allowance fixed by the Government.

**14.** The Committee may, with the prior approval of the Minister, employ the persons required to assist the Committee in the exercise of the functions conferred on it by this Act.

**15.** The rules of operation and internal management of the Committee and the rules governing the administration of its affairs are prescribed by government regulation.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **AMENDING PROVISION**

#### **CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

**16.** The Charter of human rights and freedoms (chapter C-12) is amended by inserting the following section after section 45:

“**45.1.** Every person has a right to have physical and economic access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food corresponding to his needs and dietary choices.”

## **CHAPTER V**

### **MISCELLANEOUS AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

**17.** The Government may make any regulation necessary for the implementation of the right to food.

**18.** The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is responsible for the administration of this Act.

**19.** This Act comes into force on (*insert the date of assent to this Act*).