

## **RESOLUTION**

**NO. R-20-282**

**CITY HALL: September 3, 2020**

**BY: COUNCILMEMBER GISLESON PALMER**

**SECONDED BY:**

### **Resolution of the New Orleans City Council Calling on the United States Department of Agriculture to Extend the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's Operation of the Disaster Household Distribution Program in New Orleans**

**WHEREAS**, As of August 25, 2020, the state of Louisiana has had 144,116 confirmed Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) cases, leading to 4,797 deaths, with 11,229 confirmed cases and 572 deaths in Orleans Parish alone; and,

**WHEREAS**, While new daily COVID-19 cases and deaths reported in New Orleans are trending downward in recent weeks, the state and city remain in Phase Two of reopening, which prohibits certain activities in the interest of public health; and,

**WHEREAS**, During Phase Two, those businesses permitted to operate must follow mandatory safety requirements, including having the least number of individuals on premises necessary, and many other businesses must remain closed, including bars; and,

**WHEREAS**, Because of these restrictions and the overall impact COVID-19 has had on the economy, nearly one-third of the 90,000 workers in New Orleans hospitality jobs are unemployed; and,

**WHEREAS**, According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, New Orleans had an overall unemployment rate of 16 percent in June 2020, compared to just 5.7 percent a year before; and,

**WHEREAS**, Due to the City's heavy reliance on tourism and hospitality, both of which are hampered by COVID-19, many workers cannot expect to be immediately reemployed; and,

**WHEREAS**, The \$600 federal unemployment benefit and eviction protection, both offered under the CARES Act, are no longer available to impacted families; and,

**WHEREAS**, According to United Way of Southeast Louisiana, even before COVID-19, almost half (47 percent) of Southeast Louisiana's population was living below the ALICE threshold; and,

**WHEREAS**, Across the state and especially in New Orleans, high unemployment and low wage jobs, coupled with the rising costs of food, housing, and utilities, have increased and

will continue to increase the need for emergency food assistance, according to Second Harvest of Greater New Orleans; and,

**WHEREAS,** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided its approval for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) to operate the Disaster Household Distribution program in March, which was later extended through July 2 in subsequent approvals; and,

**WHEREAS,** This approval has allowed food banks to serve families in New Orleans – which has a prevalence of food insecurity at 18 percent of the population, above the national average of 12 percent – and throughout the region; and,

**WHEREAS,** The current economic situation and severe impact of the COVID-19 emergency on the hospitality industry, both cited as USDA’s reasons for granting its approval for Disaster Household Distribution, continue to this day; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED,** That the New Orleans City Council calls on the United States Department of Agriculture to Extend the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry’s Operation of the Disaster Household Distribution program, to ensure that the local food banks serving New Orleans families may sustain their operations for at least the next month; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That, given that our city’s chief industries, hospitality and tourism, are among those most impacted by COVID-19, the City Council anticipates that New Orleanians will need food assistance for months and years to come, and City, State and Federal leaders must provide the resources critical to families’ survival; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the Clerk of Council shall transmit this resolution to Secretary Sonny Purdue, Governor John Bel Edwards, Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Senator Bill Cassidy, Senator John Kennedy, Representative Steve Scalise, Representative Cedric Richmond, Representative Clay Higgins, Representative Mike Johnson, Representative Ralph Abraham, and Representative Garret Graves.

**THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:**

**YEAS:**

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:**

**AND THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**