

Governance Document

for the

New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council

Revisions Adopted November, 2020

I. Name, Location and Current Status

The full name of the Policy Council is **New Mexico Food and Agricultural Policy Council** (Policy Council). The address of the **Policy Council** is 518 Old Santa Fe Trail, Suite #1, Box 171, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505. The Policy Council is fiscally sponsored by Farm to Table, Inc, a New Mexico not-for-profit 501c3.

The **Policy Council** is an unincorporated association, democratically constituted, of private organizations and providers, public and governmental agencies, groupings of people who have come together around common interests and beliefs about the food and agricultural systems, and individuals, including those who are recipients of various food and agricultural benefit programs. These are the members of the Policy Council. It does not have a formal incorporation but does, by the creation of this document, recognize the need for rules and guidelines of its internal governance.

The **Policy Council** adheres to: its mission statement and preamble; goals and principles; articulations of its role in the food and agricultural systems, and in the conduct of all of its activities and endeavors, to generally recognized educational and charitable purposes. In its formation, current and anticipated activities, the **Policy Council** acts, and intends to act, in compliance with the requirements of its fiscal sponsorship with Farm to Table, a non profit corporation with 501(c)(3) IRS tax exempt status.

II. Preamble

The New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council is a democratically based organization, composed of a variety of groups and individuals, working on issues arising from the food and agriculture systems. The Policy Council will perform its work and activities in a collaborative manner. It will bring forward to the public eye a discussion of these issues for more comprehensive examination. It intends to educate and inform the public, those directly affected by food and agriculture programs, and public and legislative decision-makers, about selected policy issues, openly arrived at by deliberations of its members. It will advocate for these policy issues in a variety of forums, and will develop and disseminate viable policy recommendations and alternatives.

III. Mission, Vision, and Purpose

The mission of the Policy Council is to: Advocate for food systems that strengthen the food and farm economies in New Mexico, and encourage and advance keeping food grown, raised, and processed in New Mexico, through support, education, and policy. Through our work we strive to enhance the health and wellness of people and communities, and to sustain natural resources.

Vision: The New Mexico food supply and farm economies are prosperous, and support the economic, cultural, environmental and social well-being of farmers, consumers and communities.

Purpose:**The NM Food and Agriculture Policy Council is initiated to:**

- Broaden the discussion of issues to examine more comprehensively the food and agriculture systems, and how federal, state and local government and public bodies shape the food system.
- Focus on equitable food access, production, distribution, and consumption issues through a value chain philosophy.
- Create a forum by which people and the public, in conjunction with institutions involved in food and agricultural systems, including government, can meet to learn more about what each one does and consider how their actions impact other parts of the systems.
- Strive to balance a safe, nutritious, affordable and adequate food supply for all New Mexicans that will prevent food insecurity and hunger.
- Strive for fair food and agricultural systems that supports the needs of producers and consumers economically, culturally, environmentally, and socially
- Advocate for selected food and agricultural policy issues in various forums and venues.
- Coordinate education and outreach activities, and events as designated by the Policy Council.

IV. Values Statement

A just, equitable, and sustainable food system is one that provides physical, economic and community health; regenerates, protects, and respects natural resources and animals; and ensures that all people live with dignity and freedom from oppression and exploitation.

To achieve this the Policy Council must:

- Encourage the leadership, decision making, and community self-determination of small and medium scale farmers, ranchers, farm workers, food chain workers, Indigenous peoples, low-income people, women, and communities of color;
- Change policies, systems and institutional practices to target resources and benefits towards historically disinvested communities with particular attention to the health and well-being of all people in these communities;
- Support systems and policies that promote resilient local food and farm economies grounded in sustainable agriculture and just distribution of economic benefits;
- Practice environmental stewardship; and,
- Respect and sustain cultural and indigenous food traditions.

Engaging in racial and social equity work is a journey and is not linear. As practitioners the Policy Council learns, practices, reflects and repeats. The Policy Council recognizes the need for adaptations as its members encounter new perspectives and additional information. As such, this statement is a “living framework” to be reviewed and amended as we gain new understandings.

The viewpoints and consultations of diverse groups, agencies, organizations, and policy makers, provide the greatest potential for sharing, learning, and developing policies that benefit our food system, enhance our local economies, honor our social integrity, and value our environment and its resources.

The Policy Council members compose a network of like-minded organizations and coalitions striving to fulfill the goal of racial and social equity within food, farming, and ranching systems. The Policy Council members hold each other accountable to these values and work together to collaboratively address equity including and not limited to gender, racial, social, and economic issues that affect our communities and those we represent.

V. Guiding Principles for Decision-Making

In keeping with our purposes and reflecting our implicit values, we recognize and support the following principles in our decision making:

1. “Conflict Resolution:” Conflict is a predictable result of collaboration and provides positive benefits when it is cooperatively resolved. If conflict arises the Policy Council will use consensus to move forward.
2. “Consensus and Decision Making:” Decisions that advance the work and efforts of the Policy Council will be made by consensus and general agreement by all participating whenever possible. This principle stresses a cooperative development of a decision with group members working together in good faith. It requires that all present avoid obstruction in a common search for agreement. Our consensus does not require complete unanimity in order to be a decision accepted by the Policy Council. If there is not unanimity, those who dissent will stand aside. (See the next section VI on consensus regarding legislative policy issues for which the Policy Council will support and advocate.)
3. “Full Disclosure, Accountability, and Transparency:” The Policy Council depends on the open and honest sharing of information; analysis that looks with a critical eye into systemic issues in the food and agriculture systems that are developed with accuracy, clarity, and accessibility. This principle seeks to generate the most opportunity for both individuals and the community as a whole and to advance the work and efforts of the Policy Council.
4. “Participation and Decision Making:” The Policy Council values the contributions of all that choose to commit to participation in the purposes and work of the Council. The Policy Council wants to develop and improve procedures that encourage community participation in the education, deliberation and decision making processes. Democratic ethics are at the base of decision making. We will attempt to include as many members as possible through the use of technology and electronic voting.

VI. The Process for Selecting Legislative and Policy Priorities – Timeline for Deliberation and Selection for the Current Year

The Policy Council identifies four primary roles throughout the year, during legislative sessions, and interim committees: (1) the support and advocacy before pertinent forums and committees on policy issues that are introduced as bills and appropriations; (2) the consideration of policy alternatives, that arise from the Policy Council’s knowledge of the workings of the food and agriculture systems, (3) the gathering and gleaning, through a process of open discussion, review and analysis, from its members and other credible sources, for the selection of issues for support and advocacy and for placement on the tiers outlined below, and (4) the education of the Council members and the general public about food and agriculture issues at state and federal levels.

1. Early Spring Meeting

After the legislative session ends and the Governor has acted upon the submitted bills, the Policy Council convenes for its early spring meeting. This meeting initiates the Policy Council’s deliberative process for the coming year. It’s purpose is to review the outcomes of Policy Council bills and appropriations, next steps for bills and appropriations that passed, and identify the reasons for those that failed during the session or were vetoed by the Governor. This meeting will be open for

discussions on the back ground matters that affected the session. Members may also introduce for discussion their initial plans for legislative interim committees.

2. Mid-Summer Meeting

At this meeting all members are encouraged to bring issues for consideration that speak to their concerns that they perceive within the food and agricultural systems, and that fall generally within the contours of the Policy Council enunciated preamble, mission, vision, purposes, and guiding principles. This summer meeting will be conducted openly and democratically with an emphasis on robust debate, and an opportunity to hear all concerns and opportunities that can reasonably and proportionately be heard within the constraints of time and practicality. Members, in their discussions, will winnow out the concerns, focusing on those that significantly affect the food and agricultural systems, and define more clearly the emerging policy issues.

3. Pre-Legislative Session

At subsequent meetings of the Policy Council, those policy issues, occurring within weeks of the upcoming Legislative Session, particular bills and appropriation that are proposed for introduction at the upcoming legislative session will receive further consideration and deliberation. They will be placed on one of the Tiers described below. The Governing Board will decide whether to select a Legislative Team (which can include Governing Board members) or designate particular members of the Governing Board to act in the capacity to implement the Tier placement selections. It is given discretion to make immediate decisions during the Legislative Session with the obligation to report back formally to the Policy Council at its Early Spring Meeting.

4. Placement

The placement on one of the Tiers—which demonstrates the level of support and advocacy efforts the Policy Council will commit to a particular bill or appropriation--- will be decided, where possible, by a consensus and overall agreement by the members present and participation at the selection meeting of the full Policy Council.

It is recognized that some policy issues—as formulated in bills and appropriations—may cause disagreement and controversy. Thus, when agreement or complete consensus cannot be reached by forthright discussion and deliberation, a decision on the issue can be made either by the ‘sense of the meeting’ or if this is not clear, then by a vote of the members attending. A majority of the vote will determine the Policy Council’s position and where it is placed on the Tier for the next legislative session.

Any member of the Policy Council maintains the right to support and advocate, or to oppose, any bill or appropriation, separate from the Policy Council, as determined by the member’s own internal decision making process. The member will, in a clear manner, support, advocate or oppose a bill or appropriation in its own name and designation.

In any event these selected policy issues, particular bills, and appropriations should concern the enhancement and improvement of the food and agriculture systems, and may include but are not limited to areas such as health and nutrition, food security, environment, and stewardship, retention and recruitment of small farmers and ranchers, expansion of New Mexico food initiatives, and relate to and connect with state, tribal relations, and cultural traditions. These are not exclusive or vested forever. As new policy issues arise with the approaching legislative session the Governing Board/Legislative Session Team is charged to consider, review and as necessary, inform the Policy Council members.

Policy Council Tier Placement-Designation

The Policy Council reviews requests for potential legislation using the following criteria:

- Have statewide or potential statewide focus or impact.
- Supports the Values Statement (IV).

AND any of the following:

- Advance keeping food grown, raised, processed and consumed in NM.
- Does the issue already have sufficient lobbying support?
- Does the issue have support of the food and agriculture communities?
- Does it fit within the capacity of our lobbyist to contribute actual lobbying support (aside from tracking)?
- Is it politically viable?

Tier placement options include the following:

1st Tier – Lead

NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council (NMFAPC) takes the lead and is responsible for all organizing, advocacy, outreach and communications for these bills. We will track these bills and provide regular updates and action alerts. We will encourage NMFAPC members to attend legislative hearings and visit legislators. They may include bills of the NMFAPC members who ask us to take the lead.

2nd Tier - Endorse

Other organizations take lead on organizing and advocating for and communications and ask the NM Food & Ag Policy Council to stand in support, add to any advocacy communications, and tracking. NMFAPC's name may be used by sponsoring organization(s). NMFAPC may support by signing on to endorsement letters but will work less directly on these bills.

3rd Tier – Support

Bills that we are for or against that the membership wants us to track, but not take a position on. Depending on the number and types of legislation in Tiers 1 and 2, NMFAPC may not have the capacity to track Tier 3 bills.

4th Tier – Neutral

Legislation that we do not have enough evidence for members to take a position or that we choose to not take action.

5th Tier - Oppose

The membership can choose to actively oppose.

VII. Governance

a. Council Membership

The membership of the **Policy Council** is democratically constituted and open to private organizations and providers, public and governmental agencies, tribal entities, groupings of people who have come together around common interests and beliefs about the food and agricultural systems, and individuals including those who are recipients of various food and agricultural benefit programs. The Policy Council encourages representations from agriculture, health, human and social services, food related businesses and organizations, environment, education, economics, nutrition, transportation, and legal, such as but not limited to regional associations, land and water organizations, agriculture organizations, local small scale food industries and distributors, local farmers markets, grocers, cooperatives, restaurants, schools, recipients of food and agricultural programs, and consumers.

The **Policy Council** focuses on state, federal and tribal policy issues that are brought forth, reviewed, and worked on throughout the year as deemed appropriate.

This recitation of the sources of potential members is not exhaustive. All groups are considered equal in the deliberations of the Policy Council. It is open to individuals and their contributions. Individual members may be designated by their group or organization to represent them in the deliberations of the Policy Council. When a vote is necessary each organization is allowed one vote.

Members are encouraged to participate in the work of the Policy Council and its committees. Members, by attending and deliberating at the meetings and gatherings, agree in good faith to participate and act in accordance with the Policy Council's preamble, goals and purposes and principles, or, through the deliberative process, in an open manner, to alter and amend them as circumstances necessitate.

All members shall sign an authorization form provided by the Council, either as an individual, organization or as an agency, and participate in at least two Policy Council meetings per year. Membership can be withdrawn at any time.

Voting Members are representative of a group. Voting members may represent volunteer organizations.

Affiliate members: Individual members are defined as "Affiliate". Individuals may be members of the Policy Council. Affiliate Members participate as equal to all other membership other than voting. Affiliate members do not have a vote.

Membership annual dues are structured on a tier system to provide for equity and inclusion.

b. Meetings

General meetings of the NM Policy Council are held at least quarterly and include those enumerated in Section VI. All general meetings are open to the public.

Annual Meeting: The annual meeting for the **Policy Council** and election of the **Governing Board** will be held at a time, date, and place designated by the Governing Board. This meeting will include all **Policy Council's** members who are participating in the Council's work. Participation includes

actively contributing to committee work, making one's views known during deliberations and discussion and generally any good faith work done for the **Policy Council**.

Notice to Members: Notice of each meeting must be given to each member not less than five (5) or more than thirty (30) days prior to the day on which the meeting is to be held.

Governing Board and Committee Meetings: Regular meetings of the Committees and **Governing Board** will be held at a time and place to be determined respectively by the members of the Committees and the Governing Board.

Notice: Notice of each meeting of the **Governing Board** must be given to each member not less than five (5) or more than twenty (20) days prior to the day on which the meeting is to be held.

Quorum for Governing Board: The presence at any meeting of a majority of the **Governing Board** will be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Proxy voting is prohibited.

Annual Report: The **Governing Board** will present at each annual meeting a report of the **Policy Council's** activities during the preceding year.

Conduct of Meetings: All meetings of the **Governing Board** will follow the principals as set forth under Section V.

c. Rights and Responsibilities

The rights and responsibilities of members are to:

1. Create new and innovative ideas and plans for food and agricultural systems and support the advocacy of those selected policy issues as described above in Section VI.
2. Be present and vote for the members of the **Governing Board** at the annual meeting.
3. Help to maintain the direction, purposes and goals, functions, and responsibilities of the **Policy Council** through participation in the committee structure and deliberations.
4. Members may sign as an individual, organization or as an agency, and shall participate in at least two (2) Policy Council meetings per year.
5. Members may vote electronically per section V.4. Participation and Decision Making. One vote per organization.

d. Benefits of Membership

1. **Policy Council** members benefit from the opportunity to work with a broad based grouping of individuals, agencies, and organizations centered on food and agriculture issues;
2. Members will glean a greater understanding of food and agriculture systems from working together on issues;

3. By working together there is a greater likelihood that food and agriculture issues that are important to **Policy Council** members will get the needed recognition, and reform from relevant decision makers and institutions; and,
4. Education of food policy issues at State and Federal levels.

e. Committee Structure

Committees may be appointed as needed.

f. Governing Board

Number and Classes of Governing Board members: The **Governing Board** will consist of a broad representation from the **Policy Council**. There will be two classes; voting members and non-voting ex-officios. The full Board will consist of up to nine (9) voting members and up to seven (7) non-voting ex-officios. Voting members will be either individual **Policy Council** members or those members who represent private, non-governmental organizations, groups, or industry associations. Non-Voting Ex-Officios will consist of representatives from governmental agencies and organizations. The latter will educate, advise, and participate equally in all decisions other than to vote. At the request of voting members of the **Governing Board**, non-voting ex-officios will be asked to serve on the **Governing Board**.

Governing Board Members Responsibilities: The activities, affairs and property of the **Policy Council** will be managed and directed by the **Governing Board** except for the provisions and roles of the Council membership and Committees as otherwise directed in this document.

The **Governing Board** will be responsible for:

1. setting the guidelines and rules of deliberation and discussions;
2. making sure that the processes of the **Policy Council** are fair and followed;
3. monitoring the fiscal oversight of the **Policy Council**;
4. appointing the Legislative Session Team and working with it during the Legislative Session; and,
5. supporting education and outreach efforts.

The **Governing Board** or its authorized designee(s) will speak on behalf of the **Policy Council** and its issues. No one member has the authority to speak for the **Policy Council**.

Term Limits: Governing Board members can be elected for up to (3) three (2) two-year consecutive terms.

The **Governing Board** will be elected by the **Policy Council** membership at an annual meeting with an electronic voting option. The **Governing Board** will be elected for a two (2) year term.

Officers: Officers will consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, immediate Past Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Resignations: Any **Governing Board** member may resign at any time by delivering a written resignation to the chair.

Removal: Any **Governing Board** member may be removed at any time for cause. Notice of proposed removal shall be sent to the subject **Governing Board** member and the member will have the right to be heard at a special meeting called by the chair. Missing three (3) consecutive meetings without informing the Chair is considered cause.

Vacancies: Vacancies, whether caused by death, illness, resignation or removal will be filled for remainder of the term by a **Policy Council** participant who will be voted on by a majority vote of the remaining **Governing Board**.

VIII. Miscellaneous Rules

- **Fiscal Year:** The fiscal year of the **Policy Council** will be determined from time to time by resolution of the Governing Board.

Deposits, Checks, Loans, Contracts

- **Deposit of Funds:** All funds of the **Policy Council** will be deposited in such banks, trust companies, or other reliable depositories as the **Governing Board** may from time to time determine.
- **Loans:** No loans or advances shall be contracted on behalf of the **Policy Council** and no note or other evidence of indebtedness will be issued in its name, unless accepted and authorized by the **Governing Board**.
- **Contracts:** Any officer authorized by the **Governing Board** may, in the name and on behalf of the Council, enter into those contracts or execute and deliver those instruments that are authorized by the **Governing Board**. Any authorization may be general or confined to specific instances. Without such authorization from the **Governing Board**, no officers or other agent of the corporation may enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name and on behalf of the **Policy Council**.
- **Record of Accounting:** The **Policy Council** will keep books and records of accounting and will keep minutes of the proceedings of all its meetings and meeting of its committees. It will also keep a record of the names and addresses of all members of the **Policy Council**.

All books and records of the **Policy Council** may be inspected by any member of the **Policy Council** or member of the **Governing Board** or his/her agent or attorney for any proper purposes at any responsible and reasonable time.

IX. Amendments to Internal Governance Document


This Internal Governance document may be amended, altered, changed, added to or repealed by the affirmative vote of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members of the **Policy Council** at any regular or special meeting of the voting members of the Policy Board if the notice of the proposed change, amendment, alteration, addition or repeal is contained in the notice of the meeting at least five (5) days prior to such meeting.

ADOPTION OF DOCUMENT

This Governance document of the **New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council** was discussed, amended and approved in all essential provisions by the members of the **Policy Council** present at the meeting held on the __18th of November, 2020.

This Governance document was reviewed and approved for compliance with the

amendments/attachments from the **Policy Council** on this date 18th of November, 2020.

Signed by: 

Position: Executive Director of Farm to Table
on behalf of the NM Food's Agriculture
Policy Council

Print Name: November 18, 2021