North Carolina lawmakers move to improve access to fresh produce

By Tom Karst May 28, 2015 | 10:41 am EDT

North Carolina legislators took the first steps toward providing funds to help small corner retailers in the state install refrigerators to stock fruits and vegetables in their stores.

House members approved the Healthy Food Small Retailer Fund in a vote May 21, but funding for the program depends on separate legislation that hasn’t yet passed either the state’s House or Senate chambers, according to a report in the Charlotte Observer.

The proposed program would use $1 million to help 6,000 convenience stores buy refrigerators to help them sell fresh fruits and vegetables. Retailers in areas without good access to fresh foods would receive priority, according to the bill.

According to the text of the legislation, retailers who receive refrigeration equipment must give a commitment to promote and sell nutrient-dense food at a specific location for a minimum period of time.

The program would use local growers to help supply the stores, according to the report in the Observer.