

UPDATE ON COLOMBIA'S FOOD DONATION POLICY LANDSCAPE

Colombia's new Ley 2536 de 2025 does a number of things to promote food donation and reduce food waste. Most notably, the Law establishes penalties for not donating food (modifying article 17 of Law 1990 of 2019), mandates the creation of frameworks to support donation of surplus food by public entities, creates a National Fund for the Fight Against Hunger, Food Insecurity, and Food Waste, creates a public recognition program for food donors, and requires guidance and public education around food waste and food recovery. This law strengthens the country's institutional framework for implementing its "Zero Hunger" objectives and builds upon existing food donation, tax, and food-security laws. The new law establishes a dedicated national financing mechanism and unified coordination structure under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (*Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural*) to support programs that reduce food waste and promote food donation nationwide.

CURRENT
**STRONG
POLICY**

SYNOPSIS OF PRIOR FOOD WASTE DETERRENCE POLICY

Prior to this reform, Colombia's food donation framework was governed primarily by Ley 1990 de 2019, which created the National Policy to Reduce Food Loss and Waste,¹ and Ley 2380 de 2024, which expanded tax incentives for food donors and clarified value-added-tax (VAT) exemptions for donated food.² Although these laws advanced incentives for food donation, they lacked a permanent financing and implementation mechanism to sustain nationwide food recovery and donation programs. Coordination among ministries and local actors remained fragmented, and funding relied on annual budget allocations without a unified oversight body.

PREVIOUS

**NO
POLICY**

DETAILS OF THE UPDATED LAW

In August 2025, Colombia enacted Law 2536 of 2025. One of the most notable elements of the law is that it creates sanctions for businesses that destroy food. Article 8 of the Law modifies the Law 1990 of 2019 (National Policy on Food Loss and Waste) to create these sanctions. Law 1990 encouraged businesses to not waste food and to donate any surplus food suitable for human

consumption but did not require it. Law 2536 introduces sanctions where there were not any previously.³ Entities found noncompliant have at least 60 days to correct violations before sanctions apply, which range from one to forty times the monthly minimum wage depending on company size.⁴ Persistent noncompliance triggers publication of the violation, fines imposed under Law 1437 of 2011, and potential referral to oversight bodies for disciplinary or criminal investigation when public entities are involved.⁵

Law 2536 also creates a new framework for donation of food that is held by government officials and public entities. In Article 6, the law mandates the issuance of a national decree within six months to define standardized procedures for food donation of products by public entities that are suitable for human consumption and the selection criteria for beneficiary populations. These procedures will regulate donation by public entities of food suitable for human consumption, such as food that was seized, confiscated, impounded, or abandoned,⁶ or food not delivered during implementation of social programs.⁷

In addition to setting up these requirements and frameworks for food donation, the law creates a new funding mechanism by establishing a National Fund for the Fight Against Hunger, Food Insecurity, and Food Waste.⁸ The law creates a *patrimonio autónomo* (an independent fund managed by a fiduciary entity but attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) to finance plans, programs, and projects aimed at guaranteeing the right to food and reducing food waste.⁹ This structure allows the Fund to operate outside the annual national budget while maintaining public oversight.

The Fund's primary objectives include supporting initiatives that contribute to food security and the prevention and reduction of food waste.¹⁰ Food banks and other food recovery organizations are recognized as operational allies to assist in implementation of financed activities.¹¹ The Fund is designed to operate for ten years and must undergo annual external evaluations and present an annual report to Congress detailing its activities, expenditures, and results.¹²

The law further establishes that the Fund's resources cannot be used for the School Feeding Program (PAE) to avoid duplication of existing national programs.¹³ It also requires that project prioritization be guided by official indicators from the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), to ensure alignment with areas experiencing the highest levels of food insecurity.¹⁴

Article 7 of the Law promotes permanent public information and education campaigns aimed at encouraging food donation and reducing waste.¹⁵ These campaigns should focus on raising awareness about preventing FLW, promoting food solidarity and strengthening redistribution networks for social good among producers, marketers, distributors, and consumers alike.

Article 12 introduces a public recognition program for donors with the 'Alimentarte Seal' program, which distinguishes producers and marketers that participate in food donation. The Article also mandates creation of a "Food Donation Route" program which will efficiently connect the supply and demand of surplus food and develop



promotional and educational events and publications to recognize companies' commitment to food security and FLW prevention.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

With the enactment of Ley 2536 de 2025, Colombia's food donation and food-waste policy evolves from a framework of incentives and goals into one further strengthened by a food waste deterrence policy with sanctions, defined procedures, dedicated financing, greater public education and awareness, and increased institutional coordination. By coupling long-term funding with clear accountability measures such as sanctions for food waste (Article 8) and the requirement of a regulatory decree to unify donation procedures for food donated by public entities, this law positions Colombia as one of Latin America's leaders in building sustainable systems for food recovery and waste reduction.

STRONG POLICY ←

For more best practices related to food waste deterrence policies, please see [FLPC's Food Waste Deterrence Policy Issue Brief](#). For more best practices related to government funding and implementation mechanisms for food donation, please see [FLPC's Government Grants and Incentives Issue Brief](#).

Endnotes

- ¹ Ley 1990 de 2019, por la cual se establece la Política Nacional para la Prevención y Reducción de Pérdidas y Desperdicio de Alimentos**, Diario Oficial (Colom.).
- ² Ley 2380 de 2024, por la cual se promueve la donación de alimentos y productos de higiene personal, Diario Oficial (Colom.).
- ³ Id. Art 8
- ⁴ Id. Art. 17.3
- ⁵ Id. Art. 8(3)
- ⁶ pursuant to the powers granted by Law 1762 of 2015, Law 1333 of 2013, Decree 1165 of 2019, Decree 780 of 2016
- ⁷ Id. Ch 2, Art. 6
- ⁸ Law 2536 of 2025, art. 1.
- ⁹ Id.
- ¹⁰ Id. art. 2.
- ¹¹ Id. art. 2, ¶ 1.
- ¹² Id. arts. 1–2.
- ¹³ Id. art. 2, ¶ 1.
- ¹⁴ Id. art. 2, ¶ 2.
- ¹⁵ Id. art. 7.
- ¹⁶ Id. Art 12