



2018 Food System Legislative Priorities

Urgent item for a supplemental budget amendment in April 2018

- \$1.5 million for the **Healthy Incentives Program**, which doubles SNAP recipients' purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers, to avoid suspension of the program, currently scheduled for April 15. (4400-1001)

Budget items for Fiscal Year 2019

- The **Healthy Incentives Program**, which doubles SNAP recipients' purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers: \$6,200,000. (4400-1001, H2 request is \$1,350,000.)
- The state's **buy local organizations**, and their work to increase consumer awareness and sales of local agricultural products: \$500,000. (2511-0100, H2 request is \$300,000)
- **Mass Farm to School**, which assists public schools, universities and state agencies in sourcing and expanding offerings of healthy, Massachusetts-grown and -caught foods: \$120,000. (2511-0100, H2 request is \$120,000)
- The **Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP)**, which provides needed food for vulnerable communities via Food Banks: an increase from 2017 levels, with 10% allocated to the MassGrown program which purchases eggs, dairy, fruits, and vegetables from Massachusetts farms. (2511-0105, H2 request is \$17,673,831.)
- The **Massachusetts Food Trust**, to distribute loans and grants to projects that improve access to healthy food and jobs in low and moderate income communities: \$100,000 for program administration. (2511-0100)
- Funding for **community partners** to conduct technical assistance and education for the Healthy Incentives Program: \$275,000. (2511-0100)
- In the upcoming **environmental capital bond**, support proposed funding of farmland protection (2000-7075); farm viability and infrastructure investments (2500-7021); and the continuation of prior authorizations for farmland protection and farm viability and infrastructure investments (2500-7011, 2500-7012, 2500-7013, 2500-7014, 2500-7023, & 2500-7024).

Pending legislation

HB2465: An Act relative to Agricultural Commission input on board of health regulations

Would require that municipal boards of health give local agricultural commissions an opportunity to weigh in on new or changing regulations related to agriculture, so that farmers' perspectives and needs can be taken into account.

HB2131: An Act relative to an agricultural healthy incentives program

Would establish the framework for the Healthy Incentives Program program's long-term sustainability.

SB838/HB3327: An Act encouraging the donation of food to persons in need

Would provide civil liability protection for persons who donate food directly to consumers, as well as for food establishments that donate food whose labeled date has passed, and a tax credit to Massachusetts farmers in the amount of the fair market value of the donated food, with a \$2,000 annual cap per farmer.

HB3915: An Act to establish estate tax valuation for farms

Would lower the state estate tax on farms, by allowing farmland and forestland to be taxed at the same rate as it is for property tax purposes. Because of high land values farm families can face steep estate taxes, reducing the viability of the farm for the next generation.

HB3908: An Act relative to the dairy farm tax credit

Would increase the limit of the existing credit to \$8 million from \$4 million per year, to help offset the gap between the price of milk production for Massachusetts farmers, and the purchase price set by federal pricing programs.

SB1532/HB3338: An Act to promote urban agriculture and horticulture

Would allow cities with populations over 50,000 to adopt an optional property tax break for land used for urban agriculture, to help overcome the high price of urban land and promote the health, economic, and environmental benefits of growing food in cities.

HB3549: An Act relative to healthy eating in school cafeterias

Would establish pilot programs to support schools in upgrading their kitchens to do more scratch cooking, provide mini-grants for farm-to-school programming, and set parameters for a Farm to School Interagency Task Force.

SB242/HB327: An Act regarding breakfast in the classroom

Would require that all schools where 60% or more of the students qualify for free and reduced meals serve breakfast after the bell, in the classroom.

HB101/SB612: An Act improving public health through a common application for core food, health and safety-net programs

Would create a common application for Mass Health and SNAP benefits (as well as other DTA administered benefits), improving efficiency and increasing food security for over 570,000 people who are on MassHealth and qualify for SNAP.

H3856: An Act relative to expanding agricultural land

Would allow some non-contiguous agricultural lands under the same farm ownership be aggregated to benefit from Chapter 61A tax valuation.

H2365/S1004: An Act to improve the Commonwealth's economy with a strong minimum wage and a strong tipped minimum wage

Would increase the minimum wage to \$15 by 2021. Approximately 29 percent of the state's workforce, or 947,000 workers earn less than this now.

The following organizations, representing thousands of farms, consumers, businesses, and institutions, support these priorities:

Alchemy Initiative	Massachusetts Farm to School
American Farmland Trust	Massachusetts Farmers Markets
Berkshire Farm & Table	Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Berkshire Grown	Massachusetts Public Health Association
Central Mass Grown	New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI)
Coastal Foodshed Inc.	New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
CommonWealth Kitchen	Northeast Organic Farming Assoc.- MA Chapter
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)	Project Bread
Food For Free Committee, Inc.	Southeastern MA Agricultural Partnership (SEMAPP)
Franklin County Community Development Corp.	Southeastern MA Food Security Network
Franklin County Food Council	Sustainable Nantucket
Groundwork Lawrence	The Carrot Project
Groundwork Southcoast	The Food Project
Island Grown Initiative	The Greater Boston Food Bank
Just Roots Inc.	The Trustees
Land for Good	The Urban Farming Institute of Boston, Inc.
Lovin' Spoonfuls	Worcester County Food Bank
Massachusetts Association of Health Boards	Worcester Food Policy Council

The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative promotes, monitors, and facilitates implementation of the 2015 Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan. We bring together stakeholder organizations to work toward a sustainable and equitable food system for the Commonwealth.