

## 2021 Legislative Priorities

The 2015 Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan recommended a range of policy changes toward a sustainable and equitable food system. Many bills have been filed in the 192<sup>nd</sup> General Court that address these recommendations. The MA Food System Collaborative and the undersigned organizations have identified these bills as priorities for passage this session.



### **An Act regarding a farmland protection and viability action plan**

SD.1169: Sen. Anne Gobi / HD.268: Rep. Natalie Blais

Massachusetts has many policies and programs to protect farmland, but no unified plan or set of comprehensive goals that they all work to support. This bill will develop a statewide Farmland Action Plan using land use data to guide state investment, policy, and regulation. Development and enactment of the Plan's recommendations will ensure more sustainable and equitable farmland protection, access, and use in order to more effectively meet the Commonwealth's food security, public health, energy, and climate change goals and needs.



### **An Act relative to an agricultural healthy incentives program**

SD.1179: Sen. Anne Gobi / HD.2939: Rep. Paul Mark

The Healthy Incentives Program leverages federal SNAP funds by incentivizing SNAP recipients' purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers, improving health outcomes for vulnerable communities and increasing sales for local farms. This bill will establish the framework for the program's long-term sustainability.



### **An Act promoting equity in agriculture**

SD.1036: Sen. Jo Comerford / HD.1661: Rep. Natalie Blais

According to the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, BIPOC farmers are represented on only 2.3% of the Commonwealth's farms, farms that steward just .3% of the land in farming and sell just .4% of the market value of agricultural goods in the Massachusetts, despite people of color making up 29% of the state's population. This bill will establish a commission charged with developing recommendations for MDAR to equitably serve socially disadvantaged farmers to address these disparities.



### **An act supporting the Commonwealth's food system**

HD.3588: Rep. Dan Donahue

Many state agencies play roles in supporting and regulating the food system, but because of limited communication between them some of these efforts are duplicative, inefficient, or even contradictory. The launch of the Food Security Task Force as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for such coordination, but that need is not limited to times of crisis. This bill will establish a state food system coordinator position to serve in an advisory capacity to all agencies to coordinate and inventory food programs, and develop and track metrics related to food system goals.



## **An Act Supporting the Commonwealth's Farmers**

SD.1852: Sen. Jo Comerford / HD.2944: Rep. Natalie Blais

Farmers in Massachusetts struggle to remain sustainable, on average earning just 96 cents for every dollar they spend producing food. They must compete in the global marketplace while facing higher input costs, more restrictive regulations, and fewer support resources than farmers in other states. This bill will create a "circuit rider" program at MDAR to coordinate support, establish a \$3 million Next Generation Farmers Fund to provide education grants, direct MEMA to incorporate food production capacity into disaster planning, and make changes to land protection programs and laws to help make farms more sustainable.

## **An Act encouraging the donation of food to persons in need**

SD.385: Sen. Jo Comerford / HD.1204: Rep. Hannah Kane

Thousands of tons of edible food is sent to landfills each year because of donors' concerns about liability, and because diverting it to those who need it can be costly. This bill will provide civil liability protection for persons who donate food directly to consumers, as well as for food establishments that donate food, 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.

## **An Act relative to in-state meat inspection programs**

## **An Act to support infrastructure needs for livestock farmers**

SD.1705: Sen. Anne Gobi / HD.4085 Rep. Natalie Blais

Demand for local meat is increasing, but Massachusetts livestock farmers have severely limited options for processing animals. This bill will establish a state meat inspection program to support the development of more flexible, local infrastructure.

## **The Following Organizations Support these Priorities**

About Fresh, Boston  
Pepperell Agricultural Advisory Board,  
Pepperell  
All Farmers, Springfield  
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative,  
Allston-Brighton, Boston  
American Farmland Trust, Northampton  
Ascentria Care Alliance, West Springfield  
Backyard Growers, Gloucester  
Be Well Berkshires, Berkshire County  
Berkshire Agricultural Ventures,  
Great Barrington  
Berkshire AHEC, Dalton  
Berkshire Grown, Inc., Great Barrington  
Bill Emerson Food Donation Act Awareness  
Campaign, Bernardston  
Boston Area Gleaners, Waltham  
Boston Food Access Council, Boston  
The Carrot Project, Boston  
Central Mass Grown, Worcester  
Chelsea Hunger Network, Chelsea  
CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining  
Agriculture), South Deerfield  
Clean Plate Law, LLC, Cambridge  
Coastal Foodshed, New Bedford  
Collaborative for Educational Services,  
Northampton  
Commonwealth Kitchen, Boston  
Community Health Network for North  
Central MA, Leominster  
Community Servings, Boston  
Conservation Law Foundation, Boston  
Hilltown CDC, Cummington  
Eastie Farm, Boston  
Everett Community Growers, Everett  
Farm to Institution New England, Boston

Farmers Collaborative, Boston/Dorchester  
The Food Bank of Western MA, Hatfield  
Food For Free, Cambridge  
Food Law and Policy Clinic, Harvard Law  
School, Cambridge  
The Food Project, Inc., Lincoln  
FoodCorps, Boston  
FoodXChange, Boston  
Franklin County CDC, Greenfield  
Franklin County Community Meals Program,  
Greenfield  
Franklin Cty. Hunger Task Force, Greenfield  
The Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston  
Green City Growers, Somerville  
Groundwork Somerville, Somerville  
Hampshire County Food Policy Council/  
Hilltown Mobile Market, Chesterfield  
Healthy Chelsea, Chelsea  
Healthy Waltham, Waltham  
HESSCO Elder Services, Sharon  
Island Grown Initiative, Vineyard Haven  
Just Roots, Inc., Greenfield  
Land For Good, Conway  
Lovin' Spoonfuls, Inc., Boston  
The Marion Institute, Southcoast Food Policy  
Council, Marion  
Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society,  
West Tisbury  
Mass Law Reform Institute, Boston  
Massachusetts Councils on Aging, Statewide  
Massachusetts Farm to School, Statewide  
Massachusetts Specialty Foods Association,  
Groton  
Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition,  
Mattapan  
Merck Family Fund, Milton

Merrimack Valley Food Bank, Inc., Lowell  
Mill City Grows, Lowell  
Multicultural BRIDGE, Berkshire County  
New England Feeding New England  
Partnership, Holyoke  
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project,  
Beverly  
NOFA/Mass, Shelburne Falls  
Northeast Harvest, Topsfield  
Open Table, Concord  
Project Bread, Boston  
Regional Environmental Council of Central  
MA (REC), Worcester  
Rescuing Leftover Cuisine, Inc., Boston  
Restaurant Worker Mutual Aid of Greater  
Boston, Cambridge  
Revere Farmers Market, Revere  
Revere on the Move, Revere  
The Salem Pantry, Salem  
Seeds of Solidarity, Orange  
Somerville Food Security Coalition,  
Somerville  
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural  
Partnership, South Dartmouth  
Springfield Food Policy Council, Springfield  
Sustainable Business Network of MA, Boston  
Sustainable CAPE, Truro  
Temple Sinai, Sharon  
Terra Cura Inc., Plymouth  
Topsfield Fair, Topsfield  
The Trustees of Reservations, Boston  
Urban Farming Institute, Mattapan  
Williamstown Agricultural Commission,  
Williamstown  
Worcester County Food Bank, Shrewsbury  
World Farmers, Lancaster