

# Natalie & Jo

at the



# Food system context

From 2017 to 2022, **Massachusetts lost two times more farmland** relative to farmland lost in other states — **27,000 acres**.

Value per acre of land:

- National: **\$3,846**
- MA: **\$13,831**

Earnings:

- Nationally, farmers **earn \$1.28** for every dollar spent on production
- In Massachusetts, farmers **lose \$0.05** for every dollar spent on production with two-thirds of Commonwealth farms are operating at a loss

# Food system context

- New England Feeding New England is calling us to understand how New England States to meet 30% of our food needs.
- There has been a lot of news about food waste being the largest contributor to municipal waste streams.
- MA had a significantly greater **increase in farm-related income** (rent, agritourism, government payments, etc.) than the U.S.
  - ◆ Most significant increase was in agritourism
- MA saw a decrease in direct to consumer sales, but an **increase in direct to retail and direct to institution sales**, as well as an **increase in sales of value-added products**

# MA legislative/political landscape

1. Commission on Agriculture in the 21st Century (Legislature)
2. Farmland Action Plan (MDAR)
3. Food Policy Council (Statewide)
4. Food System Caucus (Legislature)
5. Joint Committee on Agriculture (Legislature)
6. Make Hunger History Coalition (Project Bread)

# Bills passed in 2024

- Two provisions from ***An Act strengthening local food systems***:
  - ◆ Enables MDAR to buy and sell land
  - ◆ Specifies that land used to create and sell products from horticultural crops should be assessed and taxed as horticultural land
- ***An Act supporting farm diversification and sustainability***:
  - ◆ Strikes the 5-year limit for special permits that allow nonagricultural activities on land in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program
- ***An Act creating a state disaster relief fund***:
  - ◆ Establishes the first formal state disaster relief program; farms eligible for support
- ***An Act relative to the use of hoisting equipment in Chapter 74 vocational technical education***
  - ◆ Allows students at voc tech schools and apprentices at licensed training facilities, to operate hoisting equipment under the supervision of a licensed instructor, preparing them to be successful in their fields

# Funding in FY25 budget

- Farm to School: \$120,000
- Food Security Infrastructure Grant: \$15 million
- Healthy Incentives Program: \$15 million
- Hunger Free Campus: \$500,000
- Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance: \$42 million
- Massachusetts Food Trust: \$300,000
- Senior Farm Share: \$100,000
- Statewide Food Policy Councils: \$250,000
- Buy Locals: \$800,000
- MDAR Agriculture Marketing: \$570,000
- Universal School Meals: \$170 million

# On the horizon

- Farm omnibus focused on farmland protection, financial support for farmers, responsible energy policy for farms, and resources for new and beginning farmers
- Encourage food donations
- Amend the constitution to remove the acreage threshold so that all farmland is taxed as farmland
- Include Stockbridge 2-year degrees in MassEducate
- Codify a year-round Healthy Incentives Program
- Protect farms and food from PFAS contamination
- Codify Farm to School grants and incentivise schools to purchase local food (1:1 match program)

# Legislation (2 year cycle)



Legislation filed  
(Jan., 1st year)

Cosponsorship

Hearing

Committee  
decision

Joint Rule  
10 Day

Through other  
committees

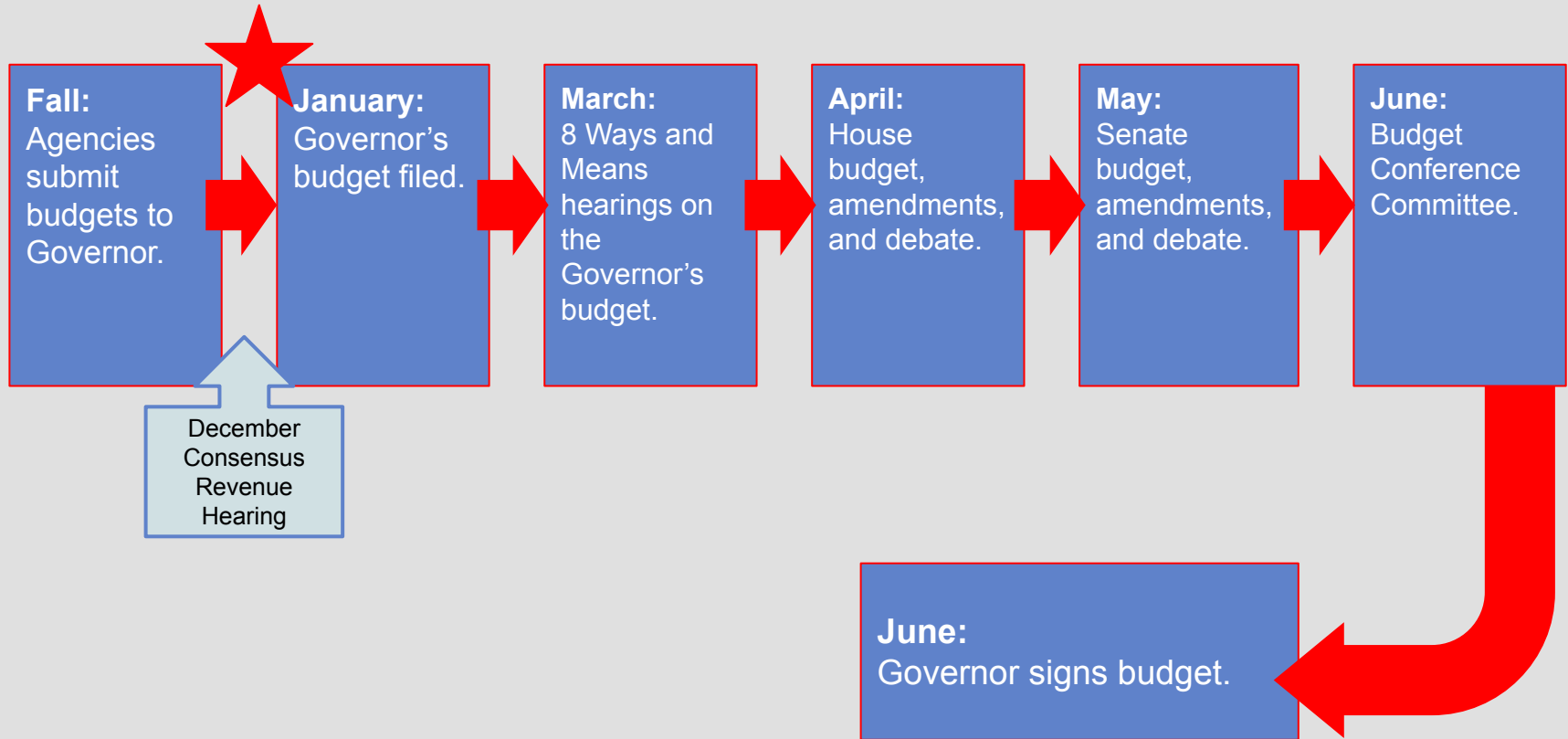
Comes to the  
floor in both  
chambers

Signed by  
Governor

2025-2026



# State Budget Process (1 year cycle)



# Jo's Contact Information

[jo.comerford@masenate.gov](mailto:jo.comerford@masenate.gov)

[www.SenatorJoComerford.org](http://www.SenatorJoComerford.org)

Bluesky: [@jocomerford.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/@jocomerford.bsky.social)

Facebook: [@SenatorJoComerford](https://www.facebook.com/SenatorJoComerford)

Instagram: [@jocomerfordma](https://www.instagram.com/jocomerfordma)

Jared Freedman ([jared.freedman@masenate.gov](mailto:jared.freedman@masenate.gov)), *Chief of Staff*

Rachel Klein ([rachel.klein@masenate.gov](mailto:rachel.klein@masenate.gov)), *Legislative Director*

**Jo's Cell:** 413.559.1649; **State House (Jared and Rachel):** 617.722.1532

# Natalie's Contact Information

[natalie.blais@mahouse.gov](mailto:natalie.blais@mahouse.gov)

[www.RepBlais.org](http://www.RepBlais.org)

Bluesky: [@RepBlais.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/@RepBlais.bsky.social)

Facebook: [@RepBlais](https://www.facebook.com/RepBlais)

Instagram: [@RepBlais](https://www.instagram.com/RepBlais)

Corinne Coryat - [corinne.coryat@mahouse.gov](mailto:corinne.coryat@mahouse.gov)

Phone: 413-362-9453

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