

2025-26 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan recommended a range of policy solutions toward an equitable, sustainable, and resilient local food system; many bills filed in the 194th General Court address these recommendations. The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative and the undersigned organizations have identified these bills as priorities for passage this session.



An Act relative to urban Farmland

S.61: Sen. Adam Gomez / H.121: Rep. Pat Duffy

These bills will support the conversion of vacant lots and underutilized land in environmental justice communities into urban farms, community gardens, and other agricultural enterprises. Urban agriculture supports increased economic development, food security, and climate and heat resilience. This policy proposal was outlined in the [2023 Resilient Lands Initiative](#).



An Act to promote food literacy

S.392: Sen. Jason Lewis / H.735: Reps. Andres Vargas and Mindy Domb

To help Massachusetts children lead healthy, independent, thoughtful lives, all students in grades K-12 should have access to food system education in school. These bills will add food literacy to the list of topics that students should learn about in school, and provide the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) with opportunities and resources to support those lessons.



An Act protecting our soil and farms from PFAS contamination

S.56: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.109: Rep. James Arena-Derosa

These bills will provide financial and liability relief should a farmers' ability to grow crops be impacted by PFAS, establish an account to support technical assistance and education to help farmers adapt to new practices that reduce the use and dispersion of PFAS, and ban biosolids from being spread on agricultural land.



An Act fostering agricultural resilience in Massachusetts

S.55: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.112: Rep. Natalie Blais

Farmers in Massachusetts struggle to remain sustainable, on average earning just 95 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 supportive resources than farmers in other states. These bills will establish a \$3 million Next Generation Farmers Fund to provide education grants, direct MEMA to incorporate food production capacity into disaster planning, allow MDAR to protect whole farms in the APR program, allow MDAR additional authority as land is being sold, and more.



An Act promoting equity in agriculture

S.53: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.111: Rep. Natalie Blais

BIPOC farmers are represented on only 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 Massachusetts, despite people of color making up 32% of the state's population. These bills will establish a commission charged with developing recommendations for MDAR to equitably serve socially disadvantaged farmers to address these disparities.



An Act relative to an agricultural healthy incentives program

S.104: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.222: Reps. Mindy Domb and Andres Vargas

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



An act supporting the Commonwealth’s food system

H.120: Reps. Dan Donahue and Pat Duffy

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. These bills 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 encouraging the donation of food to persons in need

S.1043: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.3154: Rep. Hannah Kane

Thousands of tons of edible food are sent to landfills each year because of donors’ concerns about liability, and because diverting it to those who need it can be costly. These bills will provide civil liability protection for individuals and food establishments who donate food directly to consumers, and a tax credit to Massachusetts farmers in the amount of the fair market value of the donated food, with a \$25,000 annual cap per farmer.



Proposal for a legislative amendment to the constitution relative to agricultural and horticultural lands

S.11: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.71: Reps. Natalie Blais and Hannah Kane

Article 99 of the Massachusetts Constitution authorizes lower tax rates for agricultural land, but only on parcels greater than five acres. Changes in management practices have made farming on smaller parcels more sustainable, the subdividing of large tracts of land means many farmers farm on multiple smaller parcels, and rising land prices put larger parcels out of reach for many farmers, particularly beginning farmers and farmers of color. This proposed amendment will remove the acreage requirement, making farmland of any size eligible for tax relief.

SUPPORTERS

Acton-Boxborough Farmers Market, Acton
 All Farmers Inc., Springfield
 American Farmland Trust - New England
 Berkshire Agricultural Ventures, Great Barrington
 Berkshire Bounty, Great Barrington
 Berkshire Grown, Great Barrington
 Bev’s Patchwork, Westfield
 Boston Area Gleaners, Acton
 Boston Public Market Association, Boston
 Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro South, Taunton
 Bread of Life, Malden
 Central Mass Grown, Rutland
 Chicopee Public Schools, Chicopee
 Commonwealth Kitchen, Boston
 Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, South Deerfield
 Community Servings, Jamaica Plain
 Conservation Law Foundation, Boston
 Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Chicopee
 Food For Free, Somerville
 Food Link, Arlington
 Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Greenfield
 Franklin County Food Council, Greenfield
 Fresh Truck, Boston
 Friends of Holly Hill Farm, Cohasset
 Green City Growers, Somerville
 GreenRoots, Chelsea
 Groundwork Somerville, Somerville
 Grow Food Northampton, Northampton
 Growing Places Garden Project Inc., North Central Mass.
 Health Leads, Boston
 Healthy Waltham, Waltham
 Just Roots, Greenfield
 Lexington Farmers Market, Lexington
 Massachusetts Councils on Aging, statewide

Massachusetts Farm to School, Boston
 Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, statewide
 Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston
 Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Boston
 Melrose Farmers’ Market, Melrose
 Mill City Grows, Lowell
 Natick Farmers Market, Natick
 New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Beverly
 NOFA/Mass, Florence
 Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust, Boston
 North Shore Food and Farming Coalition, Beverly
 Nuestras Raíces Inc, Holyoke
 Our Neighbors’ Table, Amesbury
 Roslindale Village Main Street, Boston
 Second Chance Composting LLC, Adams
 Seeds of Solidarity, Orange
 Spoonfuls, Newton
 Somerville Winter Farmers Market, Somerville
 Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership, Bristol/Norfolk/Plymouth Counties
 Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts, Boston
 Sustainable CAPE, Truro
 Sustainable Nantucket, Nantucket
 The Food Project, Lynn, Wenham, Boston, Lincoln
 The Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston
 The Marion Institute, Marion
 The Urban Farming Institute of Boston, Inc., Boston
 Union Square Main Streets, Somerville
 Watertown Farmers Market, Watertown
 Westfield Farmers Market, Westfield
 Winchester Farmers Market Community Hub, Winchester