



July 1, 2026

Senator Becca Rausch, Chair
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon St., Room 215
Boston, MA 02133

RE: S.3064, An Act to build resilience for Massachusetts communities

Dear Conferees:

The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative greatly appreciates the strength of both the House and Senate's Mass Ready Act proposals in relation to local food system needs. Food security and climate preparedness is addressed in meaningful ways that demonstrate the commitment of the Massachusetts legislature to a sustainable, equitable, and resilient local food system.

In a few instances, the Senate and House proposed different levels of investment for the Collaborative's priorities. The following list identifies the funding level that will support a more sustainable, equitable, resilient and connected food system in Massachusetts:

- **Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program (2511-0124):** We appreciate both chambers' commitment to decreasing food insecurity and supporting farmers, fishermen, schools, and businesses across the Commonwealth. These businesses and organizations have significant capital needs to grow their operations and reach more food insecure residents. We request the Committee include the House proposal of \$150 million for this line item, to better meet the demand for this program that has often been able to fund only one-third of applications over the past six years.
- **Massachusetts Food Trust Program (earmark within 2511-0124):** We urge the Committee to include the Senate's proposal of \$7.5 million for this program that provides grants and loans to food businesses and nonprofits located in food deserts. Demand for grants has outgrown available authorizations.
- **Massachusetts Healthy Soils Program (earmark within 2000-7082):** We appreciate both chambers' inclusion of this program in this line item and request the Committee support the Senate's proposal for \$5.5 million. This program supports agricultural healthy soils and other types of soil uses.
- **Support for cranberry growers, agriculture and commercial fishing (2000-7076):** We support the Senate's \$20 million proposal for this line item. While the federal government abandons its commitment to a climate resilient food system by rescinding grants like the Partnership for Climate Smart Commodities and decreasing staffing at USDA NRCS, the Commonwealth's investment is more necessary than ever.
- **Natural and Working Lands.** We urge the Committee to include language from outside section 11E in the House proposal that states "the secretary shall develop a quantified net positive statewide carbon sequestration and storage goal for natural and working lands".



We believe this will dovetail with the work of the Healthy Soils program and begin to measure the contributions working lands have towards our state climate goals.

We appreciate that the chambers each proposed, and we encourage the Conference Committee to retain in the final proposal:

- \$40 million for the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program and land acquisition line item 2511-0125,
- \$26 million for the Climate Smart Agriculture, urban agriculture, farmland plan implementation, food safety, farm viability, and agricultural compost line item 2500-7022,
- A commitment to carry forward unspent funds from the 2018 bond bill for the above line items, as they represent significant unspent funding that should be programmed in a future capital budget,
- Similar language of outside sections pertaining to unlocking the milk producers security fund,
- An outside section that will add the Division of Marine Fisheries and the UMass Extension service as official members of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council,
- An outside section that will grant MDAR a right of first refusal positioned behind a municipality when protected farmland comes up for sale.

We encourage the Conference Committee to adopt the above policy items and authorization levels, to continue the Legislature's robust commitment to the Commonwealth's local food system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Miller, Policy Director