



Monday, January 29, 2018

House Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon St.
Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Sánchez, Vice-Chairman Kulik, and members of the Committee:

The undersigned organizations, farms, and farmers markets, representing hundreds of thousands of individuals, businesses, and institutions across the Commonwealth, urge the Legislature to include \$6.2 million for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) in its Fiscal Year 2019 budget proposal. HIP is improving health outcomes in some of Massachusetts' most vulnerable communities, while creating markets for local farms. Every dollar allocated to this program is a direct investment in the health of Massachusetts residents and communities, our local economy, and our natural resources.

The Healthy Incentives Program provides a dollar-for-dollar match for SNAP dollars spent on fruits and vegetables purchased at participating farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs statewide.

Since HIP's launch in April 2017, SNAP recipients have purchased more than \$3 million of produce from local farmers, earning an equal amount of incentives in the process. That's nearly a 600% increase in sales of fresh, healthy, local foods to low-income families over 2016 figures. More than 35,400 households have participated, representing over 62,500 individuals. Close to 50% of the households that have benefited include a senior, and more than 34% include a child. The program's success so far can also mean savings of more than \$1.1 million in public health costs, due to reductions in chronic disease and medical costs brought about by healthy eating.

For the 200 farmers participating in HIP, this \$3 million in increased sales makes it possible for them to hire local residents, purchase goods and services from local businesses, and employ sustainable management practices that protect farmland and other natural resources, contributing to Massachusetts' environmental health. For every dollar spent on purchasing vegetables directly from a Massachusetts farmer, an additional \$1.12 in local economic activity is generated, meaning HIP has stimulated at least another \$3.1 million in financial transactions in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth's decades of innovative anti-hunger work and investments in direct-to-consumer sales of farm products set the stage for HIP. The USDA grant program that launched HIP was in response to a pilot program in Massachusetts in 2011-12 which incentivized fruit and vegetable purchases by SNAP recipients. That study found that monetary incentives have a positive impact on healthy eating for families that otherwise may be limited to less-healthy foods due to budgetary constraints. HIP has already earned national attention for its sizable participation from

both SNAP recipients and farmers, and for its innovative integration with the SNAP EBT system, which removes the stigma for SNAP recipients of having to “shop differently” using coupons or tokens.

Significant investment has been made in the extensive infrastructure necessary to operate HIP – back-end technology, outreach and communications, management, and other critical aspects of the program – and demand for the program is clear. The need for ongoing financial support for the incentives is critical.

The Commonwealth has been a national leader in addressing food insecurity and farm viability for many years. We urge the Committee to continue to invest in HIP so that this innovative program can continue to improve the health of our citizens, sustain our farms, and support a healthy environment for all residents of Massachusetts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input.

Sincerely,



Winton Pitcoff, Director

On behalf of:

Organizations

AARP Massachusetts, statewide
Alchemy Initiative, Pittsfield
American Heart Association and American Stroke Association, Waltham
Arlington EATS, Arlington
Arlington Food Pantry, Arlington
Backyard Growers, Gloucester
Be Well Berkshires, Pittsfield, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge
Berkshire Community Action Council, Inc., Berkshire County
Berkshire Farm & Table, Sheffield
Berkshire Grown, Berkshire County
Beverly Farmers’ Market, Beverly
Boston Area Gleaners, Inc., Waltham

Buy Fresh Buy Local Cape Cod, Barnstable
Cape Ann Farmers’ Market, Gloucester
The Carrot Project, Boston
Central Mass Grown, Worcester
Children’s HealthWatch, Boston
CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture), South Deerfield
Citizens for Citizens, Inc., Greater Fall River
Clean Water Action, statewide
Coalition for Social Justice, Southeastern Massachusetts
CommonWealth Kitchen, Docrchester
Community Action of the Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin Regions, Greenfield

Community Health Network of North
Central Mass, 27 North Central towns
Community Servings, Jamaica Plain
Conservation Law Foundation, Boston
Florence Congregational Church, Florence
The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts,
Hatfield
Food For Free Committee, Inc., Cambridge
FoodCorps, Boston
Franklin County Community Development
Corporation, Greenfield
Franklin County Food Council, Greenfield
Friendly House, Inc., Worcester
Gardening the Community, Springfield
Ginny's Helping Hand, Inc., Leominster
Greater Boston Nazarene Compassionate
Center, Inc., Mattapan
Greening Greenfield, Greenfield
Groundwork Lawrence, Lawrence, Methuen
& Haverhill
Grow Food Northampton, Northampton
Growing Places/Fitchburg Farmers Market,
Leominster
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell,
Westford
Health Care Without Harm, Cambridge
Healthy Hampshire, Northampton
Hilltown Community Health Center,
Worthington, Huntington
Hopkinton Harvest, Inc., Hopkinton
Island Grown Initiative, Tisbury
Just Roots Inc., Greenfield
Let's Talk About Food, Cambridge
Lettuce Be Local, Sterling
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, Worcester
Lynn Economic Opportunity (LEO), Lynn,
Nahant, Swampscott, Wakefield, Saugus
and Marblehead
Marion Institute, Marion
Martin Luther King Family Services, Inc.,
Springfield

Mass Farmers Markets, Waltham
Mass Law Reform Institute, Boston
Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and
Dietetics,
Massachusetts Association of Health Boards,
Plainville
Massachusetts Councils on Aging, statewide
Massachusetts Farm to School, statewide
Massachusetts Health Council, statewide
Massachusetts Public Health Association,
Boston
Merrimack Valley Food Bank, Lowell
Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston
Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston
Mill City Grows, Lowell
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, Athol
Murray UU Church Food Pantry, Attleboro
NAC Food Pantry, Whitinsville
NASW-MA, Boston
New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) ,
Belchertown
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project,
Lowell
newedibles.com, Colrain
North Adams Council on Aging, North
Adams
Northampton Survival Center, Northampton
Northeast Organic Farming Association,
Massachusetts Chapter, Barre
Old Colony YMCA, Brockton
Positive Change for Animals, Clinton
Project Bread-Walk for Hunger, East Boston
Rachel's Table, Worcester
Regional Environmental Council of Central
MA, Worcester
Revere on the Move, Revere
Shape Up Somerville, Somerville
Somerville Food Security Coalition,
Somerville
Southbridge Food Share, Southbridge

Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural
Partnership, South Dartmouth
Springfield Food Policy Council, Springfield
St. James food Pantry, South Grafton
St. James Outreach Group, South Grafton
Stone Soup Cafe, Greenfield
Sustainable CAPE, Truro
Sustainable Nantucket/Community Farm
Institute, Nantucket
Tapestry Health Systems, Florence
The Food Project, Boston
The Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston

The Nutrition Center, Inc., Great Barrington
The Open Door, Gloucester
The Trustees, statewide
Toxics Action Center Campaigns, Boston
United Neighbors of Fall River, Fall River
Urban Farming Institute, Roxbury
Western Massachusetts Health Equity
Network, Amherst
WHEAT Community Connections, Clinton
Worcester County Food Bank, Shrewsbury
Worcester Food Policy Council, Worcester

Farms and Farmers Markets

Amherst Winter Farmers' Market, Hadley
Apponagansett Farm, Dartmouth
Arrowhead Farm, Newburyport
Ashfield Farmers market, Ashfield
Ashmont Farmers Market, Dorchester
Berberian Farm, Northborough
Bowdoin Geneva Farmers Market,
Dorchester
Braintree Farmers Market, Braintree
Breezy Gardens, Leicester
Brookside Family Farm, Westminister
Brox Farm, Dracut
Busa Farm and Markets, Concord, Lincoln,
Lexington
Cambridge Winter Farmers Market,
Cambridge
Citysoul Farmers Market, Springfield
Crimson and Clover Farm, Northampton
East Boston Farmers Market, East Boston
East Street Farm Stand, Tewksbury
Farmer Dave's, Dracut
Farmers' Market at Forest Park, Springfield
Fitchburg Farmers Market, Fitchburg
Flats Mentor Farm, Lancaster
Florence Farmer's Market, Florence
Flourish Farm, Brimfield

Foppema's Farm LLC, Northbridge
Freedom Food Farm, Raynham
Fresh Truck, Boston
Front Yard Farm, Ware
Fungi Ally, Hadley
Gibney Gardens, Danvers
Good Bunch Farm, Conway
Gooseberry Farm, West Springfield
Hager's Farm Market, Shelburne
Harper's Farm & Garden, Lancaster
Hart Farm, Conway
Healthy Futures Farm, Westport
Heart Beets Farm, Berkley
Hill Orchard, Westford
Holiday Brook Farm, Pittsfield, Dalton
Holyoke Farmers' Market, Holyoke
Intervale Farm, Westhampton
Ladybug Farm Produce, Hubbardston
Lane Gardens & Oakdale Farms, Dighton,
Rehoboth, Seekonk
Langwater Farm, Easton
Lyonsville Farm, Colrain
MacArthur Farm, Holliston
Many Hands Organic Farm, Barre
Mary's Garden, Southbridge
McKinstry Market Garden Inc., Chicopee

Mill City Grows, Lowell
Moonlight Farm, Ashby
Moonlight rose, Swansea
Mycoterra Farm, South Deerfield
New Bedford Farmers Markets, New Bedford
Newton Farmers' Market, Newton
Northampton Farmers Market, Northampton
Nutwood Farm, Cummington
Old Friends Farm, Amherst
Overlook Farm, Brookfield
Paradise Hill Farm/Boan Farm, Westport
Park Hill Orchard, Easthampton
Pignatare's Farm, Westfield
Rainbow Harvest Farm, Greenfield
REC Community Farmers Markets,
Worcester
Red Apple Farm, Red Apple Farm
Red Fire Farm, Montague, Granby
Revere Farmers Market, Revere
River Street Gardens, Halifax
Sally Frank's Farmers' Market, Melrose
Sentinel Farm, Belchertown
Shelburne Falls Farmers Market, Shelburne
Falls
Sibling Organic Crops, Brockton
Sibling Organic Crops, Brockton
Silverbrook Farm, Dartmouth
Simple Gifts Farm, Amherst
Skinny Dip Farm, Westport
Somerville Winter Farmers Market, Somerville
Springfield Central Downtown Farmers'
Market, Springfield
Stoneham farmers market, Stoneham
Stony Hill Farm, Wilbraham
Summit farm, Belchertown
Sweet Morning Farm, Leyden
Tangerini's Farm, Millis, Natick
The Atherton Farm, Buckland
The Benson Place, Heath
The New Bedford Farmers Market, New
Bedford

Trotwood Acres Farm, Westfield
Two Field Farm, Wayland
Under the Sun Farm, North Dighton
Union Square Farmers Market, Somerville
Upinngil, Gill
Upswing farm, Ashland, Holliston
Urban Artisan Farm Inc., Springfield
Urban Faring Institute, Dorchester
Valley Opportunity Council, Chicopee
Wakefield Farmers Market, Wakefield
Wally's Vegetables, Haverhill
Watertown Farmers' Market, Watertown
Wayland Winter/Summer Farmers' Markets,
Wayland