HOUSE DOCKET, NO. FILED ON: 1/13/2009

**HOUSE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . No.**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESENTED BY:

**Peter J. Koutoujian**

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General
 Court assembled:*

 The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing a special commission on community farming.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

PETITION OF:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name: | District/Address: |
| Peter J. Koutoujian | 10th Middlesex |

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**In the Year Two Thousand and Nine**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

An Act establishing a special commission on community farming.

 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

SECTION 1. There is hereby established a special commission to consist of 15 members to bring all stakeholders of the community farming system together to review the ways in which aid and support can be provided to community farming initiatives within the Commonwealth. The special commission shall consist of the following members; the commissioner of the department of agricultural resources, or his designee, the commissioner of the department of public health, or his designee, and 13 persons to be appointed by the governor, one of whom shall be a representative from the Agriculture and Landscape program at the University of Massachusetts extension, one of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Public Health Association, one of whom shall be a representative of the Food Project, one of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts chapter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, one of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Council, one of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Farm to School Project, one of whom shall be a representative of Massachusetts 4-H, one of whom shall be a representative of the New England Small Farm Institute, one of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Association of Dairy Farmers, one of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, and two of which shall be community farmers from the Commonwealth. The special commission shall be chaired by the commissioner of the department of agricultural resources, or his designee.

The purpose of this commission shall be to make recommendations regarding action steps to promote community farming, enhance the state’s agricultural economy, improve the health of the citizens of Massachusetts by promoting fresh and locally-produced food and expanding their availability through community farms, promote environmental sustainability in the food system, help protect farmland and encourage the growth of community farming. In undertaking its review, the special commission shall examine among such areas it deems necessary, the following: informing and educating lawmakers and the public about the state food system, coordinating and integrating the public agencies involved in food policy, such as agriculture, public health, environment, transportation, and community development, linking farmers with consumers, institutions and businesses, and identifying and supporting new approaches for preserving farmland and supporting the next generation of farmers.

The special commission shall submit a report within 12 months of the passage of this act to the joint committee on environment, natural resources and agriculture, and the house and senate committees on way and means.