

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Linda Dorcena Forry

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 the Massachusetts food policy council.

PETITION OF:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MASSACHUSETTS FOOD POLICY COUNCIL.

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

1 Chapter 20 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 6C the following section:—

2

3 Section 6D. There is established within the Office of the Governor a Massachusetts Food Policy Council,
4 hereinafter referred to as the council. The purpose of the council shall be to develop a comprehensive
5 food policy for the commonwealth that will enhance the economic viability of Massachusetts
6 agriculture; promote food security and the long-term sustainability of the state's food supply; expand
7 production, access to and consumption of fresh, healthy, safe and locally produced foods; and improve
8 all residents' nutritional health, especially in communities with disproportionate burdens of
9 obesity and chronic disease. The council shall (1) make recommendation on the development,
10 coordination, and implementation of a state food system policy linking promotion of good
11 nutrition, access to affordable, healthy, locally grown food, local economic development,
12 environmental protection and preservation with farming and urban issues;(2) review existing state
13 programs, policies and regulations that affect the food system and recommend to the Governor and
14 Legislature means for improved coordination or implementation of such programs, policies or
15 regulations to achieve food policy objectives; (3) review any proposed state legislation and regulations
16 that will impact the commonwealth's food system and make recommendations to the Governor and
17 Legislature regarding such legislation or regulations; and (4) prepare and submit to the Governor, the
18 joint Committee on Public Health, the joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and
19 Agriculture and any other relevant committees, an annual progress report concerning its activities, with
20 any appropriate recommendations concerning food policy objectives. The Council may propose
21 changes to existing state programs or policies or propose new state programs or policies to help achieve
22 food policy objectives; undertake a similar review of existing federal programs, policies and regulations,
23 or proposed federal legislation or regulations; make recommendations to federal agencies or the
24 commonwealth's Congressional delegation; solicit public input through public hearings or informational
25 sessions; invite additional stakeholder participation in subcommittees or working groups to address
26 issues identified by the council as needing further study or particular expertise; and conduct research

27 and analysis as needed.

28 The Council shall make every effort to communicate and coordinate with local food policy councils and
29 relevant state-appointed bodies.

30

31 The council shall consist of twenty-one members who shall be the chief executive officer or their
32 designees of the following agencies: the Department of Agricultural Resources, the Department of
33 Public Health; the Department of Education; the Department of Environmental Protection, the
34 Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Business Development, the Executive Office
35 of Administration and Finance, MassDevelopment; and the Cooperative Extension Service at the
36 University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The Governor of the Commonwealth shall also appoint up to 10
37 public members of the council, to be drawn from among the following stakeholders in the
38 Massachusetts food system: commercial farming, fisheries and aquaculture; farmland preservation and
39 conservation; farmers' markets, farm and food cooperatives, and wholesale and retail food businesses;
40 "buy local" initiatives and state or local procurement programs with expertise in accessing locally grown
41 and processed food products; food safety and public health protection; food banks, food pantries, and
42 organizations and programs addressing nutritional health and hunger; local health departments
43 addressing obesity and chronic disease; community-based coalitions focused on obesity or its
44 associated chronic diseases; schools of nutrition or public health; community-based health care
45 providers addressing nutrition and obesity; and organizations promoting development of new farm
46 businesses, urban and community supported agriculture (CSA), community gardening, immigrant and
47 refugee farming, and youth education through agriculture. At least two members of the council shall be
48 individuals who own and manage farms in the Commonwealth. One member of the council shall be a
49 member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the
50 House; one member shall be a member of the Massachusetts Senate, who shall be appointed by the
51 Senate President. Of the members first appointed hereunder 4 shall be appointed for a term of 1 year, 3
52 for a term of 2 years, 3 for a term of 3 years, 3 for a term of 4 years and 3 for a term of 5 years. Upon
53 expiration of the term of an appointed member, his successor shall be appointed in a like manner for a
54 term of 5 years. The Governor shall appoint the chair of the council.

55 The council shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the chair or a majority of the council, but shall
56 not meet less frequently than eight times a year. The Governor shall appoint personnel necessary to
57 coordinate the activities of the council, and to provide administrative support to the council, as
58 requested.

59

60

61

62

63

64

65