

HOUSE No. 4255

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand 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 6B the
2 following section:—

3 Section 6D. (a) There shall be established a Massachusetts food policy council,
4 hereinafter referred to as the council. The council shall consist of 15 members, 1 of whom shall
5 be a member of the house representatives who shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of
6 representatives; 1 of whom shall be a member of the senate who shall be appointed by the
7 president of the senate; 1 of whom shall be a member of the house representatives who shall be
8 appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; 1 of whom shall be a member
9 of the senate who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; 1 of whom shall be the
10 commissioner of the department of agricultural resources, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be
11 the commissioner of the department of public health, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the
12 commissioner of the department of education, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the
13 commissioner of the department of environmental protection, or his designee; 1 of whom shall
14 be the commissioner of the department of transitional assistance, or his designee; 1 of whom

15 shall be the secretary of the executive office of housing and economic development, or his
16 designee; and 5 of which shall be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a farmer or
17 representative of a farm organization, 1 of whom shall represent food distribution, processing
18 and marketing interests, 1 of whom shall represent direct-to-consumer marketing efforts, 1 of
19 whom shall represent a local health department addressing food safety and nutrition, and 1 of
20 whom shall represent community-based efforts addressing nutrition and public health. The
21 Council shall also have an advisory committee. The Council shall appoint members to this
22 committee. The members shall include but not be limited to the following members: 2 members
23 who are active farmers or who represent farmer associations; 1 member who represents an
24 organization engaged in farmland protection and conservation; 1 member who represents an
25 organization engaged in developing new farm businesses, urban and community supported
26 agriculture, community gardening, immigrant and refugee farming, or youth education through
27 agriculture; 1 member who represents the cooperative extension service at the University of
28 Massachusetts at Amherst; 1 member who represents food distribution, processing and marketing
29 interests; 1 member who represents a school of nutrition or public health; 1 member who
30 represents a community-based coalition or health care provider addressing obesity and chronic
31 disease; 1 member who represents citizens in need of transitional assistance; and 1 member who
32 shall represent an anti-hunger organization. The Council shall also have the ability create other
33 committees as it sees necessary to carry out its purpose. The advisory committee and any other
34 committees shall serve at the direction of the Council.

35 (b) The purpose of the council shall be to develop recommendations to advance the
36 following food system goals for the Commonwealth: (1) to increase production, sales and
37 consumption of Massachusetts-grown foods; (2) to develop and promote programs that bring

38 healthy Massachusetts grown foods to Massachusetts residents, through programs such as
39 targeted state subsidies, increased state purchasing of local products for school and summer
40 meals and other child and adult care programs, double coupon initiatives, direct market subsidies
41 to communities with identified needs, increasing institutional purchases that are Massachusetts
42 grown and other programs to make access to healthy Massachusetts products affordable; and to
43 develop these and other programs in order to increase access in communities with
44 disproportionate burdens of obesity and chronic diseases; (3) to protect the land and water
45 resources needed for sustained local food production; and (4) to train, retain and recruit farmers,
46 and to provide for the continued economic viability of local food production, processing and
47 distribution in the Commonwealth. Recommendations shall include benchmarks and criteria for
48 measuring progress in achieving each goal. Recommendations shall consider, but not be limited
49 to, ways in which the following may help achieve each of the four goals: (1) increased
50 collaboration and communication among and between state agencies; (2) increased collaboration
51 and communication among and between state and federal agencies; (3) innovative public/private
52 partnerships that can leverage private and public market influence (such as through institutional
53 purchasing and contracts); (4) changes to state or federal laws or regulations relevant to the
54 Massachusetts food system; ; (5) changes in state or federal program implementation relevant to
55 the Massachusetts food system; and (6) additional federal, state, local and/or private investments
56 needed. In developing its recommendations, the council shall solicit public input through public
57 hearings or informational sessions; the council may also conduct research and analysis as needed
58 and invite additional stakeholder participation through its advisory committee or other
59 committees to address issues identified by the council as requiring further study or particular

60 expertise. The council shall also review progress made on each of its recommendations, based
61 on the benchmarks and criteria developed.

62 (c) The council shall make initial recommendations within one year of the date of the first
63 meeting of the council. Thereafter, the council shall submit an annual report that includes
64 recommendations and progress on benchmarks as provided in subsection (b) not later than
65 December 31. The report shall be submitted to the governor, the president of the senate, the
66 speaker of the house, the chairs of the joint committee on public health, the chairs of the joint
67 committee on environment, natural resources and agriculture, the clerk of the house of
68 representative and the clerk of the senate. The Council may make an annual request for funding
69 to provide administrative and other support to the Council.

70 (d) The council shall meet periodically at the call of the chair, but not less than four times
71 annually. All meetings shall be subject to Chapter 39 of the General Laws.

72 (e) The council shall be subject to the public record requirements from Chapter 66 of the
73 General Laws.

74 (f) Members of the council shall be appointed for terms of 3 years or until a successor is
75 appointed. Members shall be eligible to be reappointed. The chair of the council shall be elected
76 by the members of the council for a term of not to exceed two years.

77 (g) In the event of a vacancy on the council, the original appointing authority shall,
78 within 60 days of the occurrence of a vacancy, appoint a new member consistent with subsection
79 (a) to fulfill the remainder of the unexpired term.

80 (h) Members of the council shall serve without compensation. The members of the
81 council who may be members of the General Court or employees of an executive agency shall
82 serve without additional compensation.