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HOUSE . . . . . No. 718

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:

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

Section 6D. There is established within the Office of the Governor a Massachusetts Food Policy Council, hereinafter referred to as the council. The purpose of the council shall be to develop a comprehensive food policy for the commonwealth that will enhance the economic viability of Massachusetts agriculture; promote food security and the long-term sustainability of the state's food supply; expand production, access to and consumption of fresh, healthy, safe and locally produced foods; and improve all residents' nutritional health, especially in communities with disproportionate burdens of obesity and chronic disease. The council shall (1) make recommendation on the development, coordination, and implementation of a state food system policy linking promotion of good nutrition, access to affordable, healthy, locally grown food, local economic development, environmental protection and preservation with farming and urban issues;(2) review existing state programs, policies and regulations that affect the food system and recommend to the Governor and Legislature means for improved coordination or implementation

of such programs, policies or regulations to achieve food policy objectives; (3) review any proposed state legislation and regulations that will impact the commonwealth's food system and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature regarding such legislation or regulations; and (4) prepare and submit to the Governor, the joint Committee on Public Health, the joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture and any other relevant committees, an annual progress report concerning its activities, with any appropriate recommendations concerning food policy objectives. The Council may propose changes to existing state programs or policies or propose new state programs or policies to help achieve food policy objectives; undertake a similar review of existing federal programs, policies and regulations, or proposed federal legislation or regulations; make recommendations to federal agencies or the commonwealth's Congressional delegation; solicit public input through public hearings or informational sessions; invite additional stakeholder participation in subcommittees or working groups to address issues identified by the council as needing further study or particular expertise; and conduct research and analysis as needed.

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

The council shall consist of twenty-one members who shall be the chief executive officer or their designees of the following agencies: the Department of Agricultural Resources, the Department of Public Health; the Department of Education; the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Business Development, the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, MassDevelopment; and the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The Governor of the Commonwealth shall also appoint up to 10 public members of the council, to be drawn from

among the following stakeholders in the Massachusetts food system: commercial farming, fisheries and aquaculture; farmland preservation and conservation; farmers' markets, farm and food cooperatives, and wholesale and retail food businesses; "buy local" initiatives and state or local procurement programs with expertise in accessing locally grown and processed food products; food safety and public health protection; food banks, food pantries, and organizations and programs addressing nutritional health and hunger; local health departments addressing obesity and chronic disease; community-based coalitions focused on obesity or its associated chronic diseases; schools of nutrition or public health; community-based health care providers addressing nutrition and obesity; and organizations promoting development of new farm businesses, urban and community supported agriculture (CSA), community gardening, immigrant and refugee farming, and youth education through agriculture. At least two members of the council shall be individuals who own and manage farms in the Commonwealth. One member of the council shall be a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one member shall be a member of the Massachusetts Senate, who shall be appointed by the Senate President. Of the members first appointed hereunder 4 shall be appointed for a term of 1 year, 3 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 expiration of the term of an appointed member, his successor shall be appointed in a like manner for a term of 5 years. The Governor shall appoint the chair of the council.

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