

HOUSE No. 3713

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Paul A. Schmid, III

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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to promote healthy soils.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Paul A. Schmid, III</i>	<i>8th Bristol</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>Antonio F. D. Cabral</i>	<i>13th Bristol</i>
<i>James M. Cantwell</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>
<i>Edward F. Copping</i>	<i>10th Suffolk</i>
<i>Cynthia Stone Creem</i>	<i>First Middlesex and Norfolk</i>
<i>Julian Cyr</i>	<i>Cape and Islands</i>
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>
<i>Carole A. Fiola</i>	<i>6th Bristol</i>
<i>Anne M. Gobi</i>	<i>Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex</i>
<i>Solomon Goldstein-Rose</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>
<i>Kenneth I. Gordon</i>	<i>21st Middlesex</i>
<i>Jonathan Hecht</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>
<i>Natalie Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>
<i>Stephen Kulik</i>	<i>1st Franklin</i>

<i>John J. Lawn, Jr.</i>	<i>10th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jay D. Livingstone</i>	<i>8th Suffolk</i>
<i>Adrian Madaro</i>	<i>1st Suffolk</i>
<i>Paul W. Mark</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>
<i>Elizabeth A. Poirier</i>	<i>14th Bristol</i>
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>Michael J. Rodrigues</i>	<i>First Bristol and Plymouth</i>
<i>Richard J. Ross</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex</i>
<i>Byron Rushing</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>
<i>Alan Silvia</i>	<i>7th Bristol</i>
<i>Frank I. Smizik</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Chris Walsh</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>

HOUSE No. 3713

By Mr. Schmid of Westport, a petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Paul A. Schmid, III and others for legislation to establish a healthy soils program within the Department of Agricultural Resources to promote the use of regenerative agriculture. Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)**

An Act to promote healthy soils.

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 6C of chapter 20 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking, in line 3, the figure “17” and inserting in its
3 place thereof the following figure:- 18

4 SECTION 2. Said section 6C of said chapter 20, as so appearing, is further amended by
5 inserting in line 16 after the word “designee”, the following words:- ; 1 of whom shall be an
6 expert in regenerative agriculture under chapter 128 appointed by the secretary of energy and
7 environmental affairs

8 SECTION 3. Said Section 6C of said chapter 20, as so appearing, is hereby further
9 amended by inserting after the word “foods”, in line 35, the following words:- ; especially those
10 produced using regenerative agriculture under chapter 128.

11 SECTION 4. Said Section 6C of said chapter 20, as so appearing, is hereby further
12 amended by inserting after the word “resources”, in line 42, the following words:- particularly
13 through regenerative agriculture under chapter 128

14 SECTION 5. Section 7A of chapter 128, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting
15 after the definition of “Garden” the following definition:-

16 “Regenerative agriculture”, agriculture that improves the health of soils, including but not
17 limited to consideration of depth of topsoil horizons, water infiltration rate, organic carbon
18 content, bulk density, biological activity, biological diversity, and bare ground, and as achieved
19 through practices such as conservation tillage or no-till, cover-cropping, planned grazing,
20 integrated crop-livestock systems, synthetic chemicals reduction, and other methodologies, and
21 in consultation with the commission for conservation of soil, water and related resources
22 established by chapter 21 section 19.

23 SECTION 6. Chapter 29, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after section
24 2VVVV the following section:-

25 Section 2WWWW. (a) There shall be a fund to be known as the Massachusetts Healthy
26 Soils Program Fund. The fund shall be administered by the department of agricultural resources.
27 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there shall be credited to the fund
28 any revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and specifically
29 designated to be credited to the fund and any gifts, grants, private contributions or investment
30 income earned by the fund’s assets and all other sources. No expenditure from the fund shall
31 cause the fund to be in deficiency at the close of the fiscal year. Money in the fund at the end of

32 the fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund and shall be available for expenditure in the
33 subsequent year and shall not be subject to section 5C of chapter 29.

34 (b) Funds shall be expended to enhance the education, training, employment, income,
35 productivity and retention of those working or aspiring to work in the field of regenerative
36 agriculture, and in providing incentives for regenerative agriculture in the commonwealth. The
37 department of agricultural resources, in consultation with the department of environmental
38 protection and the commission for conservation of soil, water and related resources, shall
39 establish, develop and implement the Massachusetts Healthy Soils Program in furtherance of this
40 purpose. Amounts credited to the fund shall be used, without further appropriation, for the costs
41 associated with administering and implementing the program and may also be used to provide
42 grants or loans on a competitive basis to public, private and charitable entities to finance projects
43 in furtherance of the Massachusetts Healthy Soils Program. Expenditures from the fund for this
44 purpose shall complement and not replace existing local, state, private or federal funding for
45 related training and educational programs.