

HOUSE No. 802

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Kate Hogan

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 establishing a special commission to ensure the resiliency of family farms in the 21st century.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Kate Hogan</i>	<i>3rd Middlesex</i>
<i>Danielle W. Gregoire</i>	<i>4th Middlesex</i>
<i>Kimberly N. Ferguson</i>	<i>1st Worcester</i>
<i>Susan Williams Gifford</i>	<i>2nd Plymouth</i>
<i>Steven S. Howitt</i>	<i>4th Bristol</i>
<i>Anne M. Gobi</i>	<i>Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex</i>
<i>Angelo M. Scaccia</i>	<i>14th Suffolk</i>
<i>Norman J. Orrall</i>	<i>12th Bristol</i>
<i>Thomas A. Golden, Jr.</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jennifer E. Benson</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>
<i>Colleen M. Garry</i>	<i>36th Middlesex</i>
<i>Hannah Kane</i>	<i>11th Worcester</i>
<i>Michael D. Brady</i>	<i>Second Plymouth and Bristol</i>
<i>Paul W. Mark</i>	<i>2nd Berkshire</i>
<i>Harold P. Naughton, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Worcester</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>

Julian Cyr

Cape and Islands

HOUSE No. 802

By Ms. Hogan of Stow, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 802) of Kate Hogan and others for legislation to establish a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to the needs of agriculture in the Commonwealth in the 21st century. Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act establishing a special commission to ensure the resiliency of family farms in the 21st century.

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. There shall be a special commission governed by section 2A of chapter 4
2 of the General Laws to conduct an investigation and study regarding the needs of agriculture in
3 the commonwealth in the 21st century, including the viability, efficiency, climate change
4 resiliency, and education, technical assistance and energy needs of farms and means of ensuring
5 farms’ ability to adapt to changing economic, climate and energy conditions.

6 The commission shall consist of 1 member who shall be appointed by the senate
7 president, who shall serve as co-chair; 1 member who shall be appointed by the minority leader
8 of the senate; 1 member who shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives,
9 who shall serve as co-chair; 1 member who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the
10 house of representatives; the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on environment,
11 natural resources and agriculture; the house and senate chairs of the joint committee on

12 telecommunications, utilities and energy; the secretary of the executive office of energy and
13 environmental affairs or designee; the secretary of the executive office of housing and economic
14 development or designee; the commissioner of agricultural resources or designee; a
15 representative of the Massachusetts farm bureau federation; a representative of the University of
16 Massachusetts Extension Service; a representative of NOFA/Mass and 2 persons who shall be
17 appointed by the governor. Members shall not receive compensation for their services but may
18 receive reimbursement for the reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their responsibilities
19 as members of the commission. The executive office of energy and environmental affairs and
20 executive office of housing and economic development may furnish reasonable staff and other
21 support for the work of the commission.

22 The commission shall review: (i) methods of supporting farms including development of
23 tax incentives and credits such as sales tax exemptions for equipment related to farm-based
24 renewable energy projects; (ii) effects of zoning bylaws on farm-based renewable energy
25 projects and means of reducing administrative and regulatory barriers to such projects; (iii)
26 potential integration of farm renewable energy systems into laws exempting agricultural
27 machinery and structures from zoning bylaws; (iv) the feasibility of establishing an incentive
28 program to facilitate the growth of non-solar renewable-energy distributed-generation projects;
29 (v) methods of encouraging the use of renewable energy resources; (vi) development of
30 potential new funding sources for grant programs in support of farms to develop farm-based
31 renewable energy capabilities including wind harvesting, energy conserving refrigerated food
32 storage pilot projects, methane capture and green combustion, and solar and photovoltaic energy
33 projects; (vii) feasibility of using farms as resiliency centers during power outages or extreme
34 weather events by installing technology such as battery storage or microgrids; (viii) the effects of

35 climate change and means by which farms may seek to adapt to climate change; (ix) the
36 feasibility and means of establishing a lower agricultural electricity rate for farms; (x) methods
37 of promoting and facilitating more prompt interconnection of energy projects owned or operated
38 by agricultural producers; (xi) possible increase in existing agricultural energy discounts; (xii)
39 ways to support, expand and enhance opportunities for agricultural tourism; (xii) the timing of
40 grant applications to the department of agricultural resources and department responses with a
41 view to facilitating more efficient and timely use of grant funds; (xiii) administrative and
42 regulatory barriers to and restrictions on farm owners placing renewable energy structures on
43 farmland; (xiv) means of addressing the need for education and technical assistance to farmers;
44 and (xv) any other matters the commission deems relevant to supporting the viability of farms in
45 the commonwealth. As used in this section, “farm” shall not include any farm used to grow
46 marijuana.

47 The commission shall file a report of its findings and recommendations, together with
48 drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into effect, by filing the same
49 with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the chairs of the senate and house
50 committees on ways and means, the senate and house chairs of the joint committee on
51 environment, natural resources and agriculture, and the house and senate chairs of the joint
52 committee on telecommunications, utilities and energy not later than June 30, 2020.