HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 3462 FILED ON: 1/17/2025

HOUSE . . . . . No. 3331

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Ann-Margaret Ferrante and Hannah Kane

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 the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Ann-Margaret Ferrante	*5th Essex*	*1/17/2025*
Hannah Kane	*11th Worcester*	*1/17/2025*
Mindy Domb	*3rd Hampshire*	*1/30/2025*
Carmine Lawrence Gentile	*13th Middlesex*	*1/30/2025*

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By Representatives Ferrante of Gloucester and Kane of Shrewsbury, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3331) of Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Hannah Kane and others for legislation to establish an executive office of food resources and security. State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *3029* OF 2023-2024.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources and Security.

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

SECTION 1. Section 2 of chapter 6A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word “affairs”, in line 3, the following words:- , food resources and security.

SECTION 2. Section 3 of chapter 23G of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after the word “projects”, in line 89, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, the following words:- and loans to food producers selected by the department of investment and financing for food production pursuant to section 10 of chapter 28B.

SECTION 3. The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after section 28A the following chapter:-

10 CHAPTER 28B.

11 EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF FOOD RESOURCES AND SECURITY

12 Section 1. As used in this chapter, the following words shall, unless the context clearly
13 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

14 "Food Producer", a person who produces food by farming, as that term is defined in
15 section 1A of chapter 128, in the commonwealth, or by taking and selling fish, including
16 shellfish, lobsters, edible crabs or other living marine resources, from coastal waters of the
17 commonwealth under a commercial fishing license, permit or certificate issued pursuant to
18 chapter 130.

19 "Food production", the process by which a food producer cultivates, raises, harvests,
20 collects, takes, gathers or otherwise handles plant or animal life, in whole or in part, whether or
21 not embedded in the soil, for the purpose of offering for sale such plant or animal life, or part
22 thereof, as food in the open market.

23 "Office", the executive office of food resources and security.

24 "Secretary", the secretary of food resources and security.

25 Section 2. There shall be an executive office of food resources and security, which shall
26 be under the supervision and control of a secretary of food resources and security, appointed by
27 the governor. The secretary may, pursuant to chapter 30A, adopt regulations for the
28 implementation or interpretation of any law enforced or administered by any department, office,
29 agency, or other entity in the executive office of food resources and security. In the executive
30 office shall be the department of food production, the department of food labor and workforce

31 development, the department of food innovation, development and research, the department of
32 investment and financing for food production, the department of food security, identification and
33 labeling, the department of economic development for locally-produced food, the department of
34 nutrition and food health and the department of self-sufficiency for food production. Each
35 department shall be headed by a commissioner. The executive office shall be organized and shall
36 function as a single state agency with the authority and control for administrative purposes
37 including, but not limited to, for the purposes of the accounting and financial system of the
38 commonwealth. The secretary shall, notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary,
39 identify and consolidate administrative activities and functions common to the separate
40 departments within the office and may designate such functions "core administrative functions"
41 in order to improve administrative efficiency and preserve fiscal resources; provided, however,
42 that common functions that shall be designated core administrative functions shall include, but
43 shall not be limited to, human resources, financial management, information technology, legal,
44 procurement and asset management.

45 Each commissioner shall be appointed and may be removed by the secretary, with the
46 approval of the governor. Each commissioner shall be a person of skill and experience in the
47 field of his appointment. The commissioner of each department may adopt reasonable
48 regulations to allow those employees within his or her department to testify in civil proceedings
49 so as to further the performance of the department's business. The commissioner of each
50 department shall appoint all necessary employees within the department, except as may be
51 otherwise provided by law. The positions of commissioner shall not be subject to the provisions
52 of chapter 31 or section 9A of chapter 30. Each commissioner shall perform such functions as
53 may be assigned to him by the secretary and shall devote his full time during business hours to

54 the duties of the position. In case of a vacancy or an emergency, the secretary may appoint a
55 person as acting commissioner for a period not exceeding 6 months, of any of the above
56 departments, provided, the appointee is a person of skill and experience in the field of his or her
57 appointment. The positions of the commissioners shall be classified in accordance with section
58 45 of chapter 30 and the salaries shall be determined in accordance with section 46C of said
59 chapter 30.

60 Section 3. The office and its appropriate departments shall carry out policy relative to
61 food production and in so doing shall:

62 (1) foster and support food producers so they are able to effectively and safely produce,
63 market and sell food in a sustainable manner throughout the commonwealth.

64 (2) promote job creation and economic development in food production and local food
65 distribution;

66 (3) create a workforce in food production that gives rise to an attractive environment for
67 next-generation food production workers and researchers;

68 (4) develop and administer programs and incentives to improve nutrition and promote
69 healthy eating habits across all age groups;

70 (5) develop statewide polices to increase demand for local foods through marketing and
71 branding initiatives, and improve market and environmental statistics to support such polices;

72 (6) encourage, support, and undertake research and maintain laboratory and other
73 research facilities to produce information regarding the science of food production,

74 transportation and consumption for the benefit of the commonwealth, its communities, its
75 citizens and other interested parties;

76 (7) enter into contracts and partnerships with private and public institutions for the
77 advancement of the goals and directives set forth in this chapter;

78 (8) develop and administer programs and recommendations to reduce input costs, while
79 strengthening financing and business planning for food producers;

80 (9) develop and administer programs to strengthen food production in the
81 commonwealth so that in the future, Massachusetts would be better suited to feed all its citizens
82 without importation of food from other states;

83 (10) foster strong relationships with food producers and consumers to achieve the goals
84 and directives set forth in this chapter while creating opportunities for cultural and economic
85 growth for the citizens of this commonwealth;

86 (11) advise and assist local governments, private and public institutions, organizations
87 and associations, businesses, industries, and individuals by providing and acting as a
88 clearinghouse for food production and labeling and consumption information, data, and other
89 materials;

90 (12) represent and act on behalf of the commonwealth in connection with federal grant
91 programs;

92 (13) keep accounts, records, personal data, enter into contracts, adjust claims, accept
93 gifts, grants, bequests and devises, and subject to appropriation, acquire real or personal property
94 by eminent domain or otherwise;

95 (14) advise and assist state agencies, cities, towns, and other units of local government in
96 the preparation of grant or loan applications with respect to any food production or protection
97 programs;

98 (15) coordinate activities among public institutions of higher education to engage in
99 complementary state educational programs and collaborative research initiatives regarding food
100 production; and

101 (16) promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out their statutory
102 responsibilities.

103 Section 4. The secretary shall have the following powers and duties concerning any
104 power or duty assigned to any department:

105 (1) the power and duty to resolve administrative and jurisdictional conflicts between any
106 such departments or officers;

107 (2) the power and duty to implement, upon request of any such department or officer,
108 programs jointly agreed to by the secretary and such agency or officer; and

109 (3) the power and duty to coordinate and improve program activities involving 2 or more
110 such departments or officers.

111 Section 5. The secretary shall conduct comprehensive planning with respect to the
112 functions of the office and shall coordinate the activities and programs of the departments and
113 divisions within the office. The secretary shall continually review the operations of the office
114 with a view toward improving administrative organization, procedures and practices, promoting
115 economy and efficiency.

116 The secretary shall prepare annually a report of the organization and activities of the
117 office as individually reported by the various departments and divisions within the office, the
118 assignment of functions to various administrative units, officers and employees, and of the
119 established places at which, and the methods whereby, the public may receive information or
120 may make requests, and such other matters as the secretary deem appropriate.

121 The secretary shall annually evaluate the status of the production, distribution, labeling
122 and consumption of food within the commonwealth. This evaluation shall be submitted as a part
123 of the report referred to in the preceding paragraph, and it shall be accompanied by
124 recommendations for appropriate actions to be taken to achieve best practices with respect to the
125 production, distribution, labeling and consumption of food within the commonwealth.

126 In order to carry out the provisions of this chapter the secretary may, and is encouraged
127 to, seek the laboratory, technical, education, and research skills and facilities of state institutions
128 of higher learning.

129 Section 6. Subject to appropriation, the secretary, with the approval of the governor, may
130 appoint such experts and other assistants as he shall deem necessary to perform the functions of
131 his office, provided that the provisions of chapter 31 and section 9A of chapter 30 shall not apply
132 to any person holding any such appointment. Every person so appointed to any position in his
133 office shall have experience and skill in the field of such position. So far as practicable in the
134 judgment of the secretary, appointments to such positions in his office shall be made by
135 promoting employees of the commonwealth serving in positions which are classified under
136 chapter 31, and such appointments shall at all times reflect the professional needs of the
137 department or division affected. If an employee serving in a position which is classified under

138 chapter 31 or in which he has tenure by reason of section 9A of chapter 30 shall be appointed to
139 a position within his office which is not subject to the provisions of chapter 31, he shall upon
140 termination of his service in such unclassified position be restored to the position which he held
141 immediately prior to such appointment; provided, however, that his service in such unclassified
142 position shall be determined by the civil service commission in accordance with the standards
143 applied by said commission in administering chapter 31. Such restoration shall be made without
144 impairment of his civil service status or tenure under section 9A of chapter 30 and without loss
145 of seniority, retirement, or other rights to which uninterrupted service in such prior position
146 would have entitled him. During the period of such appointment, each person so appointed from
147 a position in the classified civil service shall be eligible to take any competitive promotional
148 examination for which he would otherwise have been eligible.

149 Section 7. There shall be a department of food production broadly tasked with promoting
150 the effective, profitable and safe production of food throughout farms and fishing communities
151 located in the commonwealth.

152 Section 8. There shall be a department of food labor and workforce development, which
153 shall: (1) develop programs that provide economic incentive to food producers; (2) create a
154 workforce in food production that gives rise to an attractive environment for future food
155 production workers and researchers; and (3) encourage, support, and undertake research into
156 alternative centers of economic growth for food production and distribution within the
157 commonwealth, including projects like the Gloucester Genomics Institute.

158 Section 9. There shall be a department of food innovation, development and research,
159 which shall undertake research and maintain laboratory and other research facilities to provide

160 information to food producers and other interested parties regarding the science behind food
161 production. The department shall undertake research regarding the impact that specific
162 environmental, biological, meteorological and chemical conditions have on food production in
163 the commonwealth in order to, develop new sciences, proposals and techniques for the
164 conservation and enhancement of fields, water and wildlife for food production.

165 Section 10. There shall be a department of investment and financial planning for food
166 production, which shall identify and select food producers who are eligible to receive loans from
167 the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency pursuant to clause (17) of section 3 of chapter
168 23G, based on criteria to be determined by the department; provided, however, in selecting food
169 producers pursuant to this section, the department shall give preference to food producers
170 operating in designated port areas. The department shall research and investigate production and
171 operation methods of food producers, including the possibility and efficacy for producers to
172 utilize shared equipment and infrastructure, and make recommendations to reduce input costs
173 associated with production and transportation. The department shall develop programs and make
174 recommendations to food producers designed to attract entrepreneurs and other new investors
175 with a focus on providing equity-like, risk capital for production growth to be supplied in smaller
176 amounts and at lower returns.

177 Section 11. There shall be a department of food security, identification and labeling,
178 which shall develop and administer programs and policies to improve food management and
179 security and shall research the efficacy and implementation of next-generation food tracking
180 systems, food management policies and labeling procedures to ensure a secure food
181 infrastructure in the commonwealth.

182 Section 12. There shall be a department of economic development for locally-produced
183 food that shall develop and administer public relations campaigns and marketing and branding
184 programs to encourage public institutions and private businesses to purchase locally grown foods
185 in order to strengthen and maintain local food producers positions in the local marketplace.

186 Section 13. There shall be a department of nutrition and food health, which shall develop
187 and administer a public relations campaign and other programs designed to: (i) provide
188 nutritional education to food producers and consumers; and (ii) encourage consumers to adopt
189 healthy eating habits.

190 Section 14. There shall be a department of self-sufficiency for food production, which
191 shall develop and administer programs to strengthen food production in the commonwealth so
192 that in the future, Massachusetts would be better suited to feed all its citizens without importation
193 of food from other states.