

The Agriculture Bill



S.2286 An Act Promoting Agriculture in the Commonwealth

Summary

- 1 This bill provides opportunities and protections to current and prospective farmers throughout Massachusetts, increases access and availability of locally grown food products, and invests in educational and agricultural programs to further grow the industry.
- 2 The legislation reflects recommendations from the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan, finalized in December, 2015. The legislation utilizes state-owned land for non-commercial community gardens and farmers markets, and also allows farmer brewers and distillers to sell products at farmers markets.
- 3 To incentivize farmers and drive local food production, the bill eases regulatory restrictions that may currently inhibit agricultural modernization by establishing commissions to assess the management of state protected farmland and the agricultural plumbing code.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)

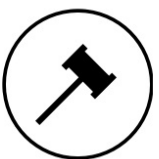


Senator Anne M. Gobi
@AnneGobi

Chair, Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture



The legislation was passed on
May 5, 2016



Passed Yeas 36 Nays 1

STATUS



Sent to the House

There are 7,755 farms in Massachusetts on over 523,000 acres to produce \$492 million in agricultural products. Massachusetts farms provide employment to nearly 28,000 workers in the Commonwealth. 80% of Massachusetts farms are family owned. 95% fit the category of "small farms" according to the USDA definition of sales below \$250,000. Massachusetts ranks 6th in the nation for number of farms with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA); a 95% increase since 2007.

RESPONSE



"Farming is more than just an industry—for our small, family-owned farms across the Commonwealth, it's a way of life. Farms also enhance the protection of open space and add to our robust tourism industry."

- Senate President Stan Rosenberg

"We are fortunate to have so many people willing to spend their time and finances to make sure the rest of us enjoy a wide array of agricultural products. This bill is a step in recognizing their efforts and to support them moving forward."

- Senator Anne M. Gobi



INFOGRAPHICS

COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION ON AGRICULTURE

A big boost to Massachusetts farmers & greater access to locally grown foods!

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