

HOUSE No. 4255

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

By Mr. Straus of Mattapoiset, for the committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture, on House, No. 718 and House, No. 776, a Bill establishing the Massachusetts Food Policy Council (House, No. 4255). September 23, 2009.

An Act ESTABLISHING THE MASSACHUSETTS FOOD POLICY COUNCIL.

FOR THE COMMITTEE:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
William M. Straus	10th Bristol

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and 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 6B the following section:—

Section 6D. (a) There shall be established a Massachusetts food policy council, hereinafter referred to as the council. The council shall consist of 15 members, 1 of whom shall be a member of the house representatives who shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; 1 of whom shall be a member of the senate who shall be appointed by the president of the senate; 1 of whom shall be a member of the house representatives who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; 1 of whom shall be a member of the senate who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of the department of agricultural resources, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of the department of public health, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of the department of education, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of the department of environmental protection, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of the department of transitional assistance, or his designee; 1 of whom shall be the secretary of the executive office of housing and economic development, or his designee; and 5 of which shall be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a farmer or representative of a farm organization, 1 of whom shall represent food distribution, processing and marketing interests, 1 of whom shall represent direct-to-consumer marketing efforts, 1 of whom shall represent a local health department addressing food safety and nutrition, and 1 of whom shall represent community-based efforts addressing nutrition and public health. The Council shall also have an advisory committee. The Council shall appoint members to this committee. The members shall include but not be limited to the following members: 2 members who are active farmers or who represent farmer associations; 1 member who represents an organization engaged in farmland protection and conservation; 1 member who represents an organization engaged in developing new farm businesses, urban and community supported agriculture, community gardening, immigrant and refugee farming, or youth education through agriculture; 1 member who represents the cooperative extension service at

the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; 1 member who represents food distribution, processing and marketing interests; 1 member who represents a school of nutrition or public health; 1 member who represents a community-based coalition or health care provider addressing obesity and chronic disease; 1 member who represents citizens in need of transitional assistance; and 1 member who shall represent an anti-hunger organization. The Council shall also have the ability create other committees as it sees necessary to carry out its purpose. The advisory committee and any other committees shall serve at the direction of the Council.

(b) The purpose of the council shall be to develop recommendations to advance the following food system goals for the Commonwealth: (1) to increase production, sales and consumption of Massachusetts-grown foods; (2) to develop and promote programs that bring healthy Massachusetts grown foods to Massachusetts residents, through programs such as targeted state subsidies, increased state purchasing of local products for school and summer meals and other child and adult care programs, double coupon initiatives, direct market subsidies to communities with identified needs, increasing institutional purchases that are Massachusetts grown and other programs to make access to healthy Massachusetts products affordable; and to develop these and other programs in order to increase access in communities with disproportionate burdens of obesity and chronic diseases; (3) to protect the land and water resources needed for sustained local food production; and (4) to train, retain and recruit farmers, and to provide for the continued economic viability of local food production, processing and distribution in the Commonwealth. Recommendations shall include benchmarks and criteria for measuring progress in achieving each goal. Recommendations shall consider, but not be limited to, ways in which the following may help achieve each of the four goals: (1) increased collaboration and communication among and between state agencies; (2) increased collaboration and communication among and between state and federal agencies; (3) innovative public/private partnerships that can leverage private and public market influence (such as through institutional purchasing and contracts); (4) changes to state or federal laws or regulations relevant to the Massachusetts food system; ; (5) changes in state or federal program implementation relevant to the Massachusetts food system; and (6) additional federal, state, local and/or private investments needed. In developing its recommendations, the council shall solicit public input through public hearings or informational sessions; the council may also conduct research and analysis as needed and invite additional stakeholder participation through its advisory committee or other committees to address issues identified by the council as requiring further study or particular expertise. The council shall also review progress made on each of its recommendations, based on the benchmarks and criteria developed.

(c) The council shall make initial recommendations within one year of the date of the first meeting of the council. Thereafter, the council shall submit an annual report that includes recommendations and progress on benchmarks as provided in subsection (b) not later than December 31. The report shall be submitted to the governor, the president of the senate, the speaker of the house, the chairs of the joint committee on public health, the chairs of the joint committee on environment, natural resources and agriculture, the clerk of the house of representative and the clerk of the senate.

65 The Council may make an annual request for funding to provide administrative and other support to the
66 Council.

67 (d) The council shall meet periodically at the call of the chair, but not less than four times
68 annually. All meetings shall be subject to Chapter 39 of the General Laws.

69 (e) The council shall be subject to the public record requirements from Chapter 66 of the
70 General Laws.

71 (f) Members of the council shall be appointed for terms of 3 years or until a successor is
72 appointed. Members shall be eligible to be reappointed. The chair of the council shall be elected by the
73 members of the council for a term of not to exceed two years.

74 (g) In the event of a vacancy on the council, the original appointing authority shall, within 60
75 days of the occurrence of a vacancy, appoint a new member consistent with subsection (a) to fulfill the
76 remainder of the unexpired term.

77 (h) Members of the council shall serve without compensation. The members of the council who
78 may be members of the General Court or employees of an executive agency shall serve without
79 additional compensation.