

SENATE No. 2737

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

Resolve to diversify farmland opportunities to combat climate change.

1 Resolved, There shall be a special commission to examine opportunities for
2 Massachusetts farms and agricultural lands to play a larger role in the Commonwealth's response
3 to climate change and to propose laws and policy changes to incentivize these actions.

4 The commission shall be tasked with examining the use of composting including the
5 potential for the establishment of a statewide grid of composting sites run by licensed operators
6 that receive local feedstocks. This network would be tasked with tracking the carbon content of
7 their compost as it is moved into farm soils. The commission shall also study the impact of
8 increasing the amount of organic feedstock being composted and sequestered in farm soils, turf
9 areas, and forest lands. The commission can also examine if farms should receive a priority in
10 access to supplies, receive technical supports and financial subsidies to make decarbonization
11 central to their operations. The commission shall also be tasked with developing metrics for
12 increasing carbon soil content over an established base line over 5 year intervals in order to
13 provide efficacy data for carbon stored.

14 The Commission shall consist of 14 members: 1 of whom shall be the Commissioner of
15 the Department of Agricultural Resources or his designee who shall serve as Chairman,

16 Commission, 1 of whom shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental
17 Protection or a designee, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Municipal
18 Association; 1 of whom shall be a representative of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation,
19 1 of whom shall be a representative of the UMass Cooperative Extension, 1 of whom shall be a
20 representative of the Massachusetts chapter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, 1 of
21 whom shall be a representative of urban farmers, 1 of whom shall be a representative of the state
22 Buy Local network, 2 of whom shall be the respective House and Senate Chairs of the Joint
23 Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture, and 4 members appointed by
24 the Governor who are involved in various agricultural activities. The commission shall convene
25 its first meeting not later than June 1, 2021 and shall file a report along with any
26 recommendations for legislative reform not later than October 31, 2021 with the Clerks of the
27 Senate and House of Representatives, the chairs of the Senate and House committees on Ways
28 and Means, and the chairs of the joint committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and
29 Agriculture.