

December 19, 2018

Governor Charles Baker
Massachusetts State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council (Council), I am pleased to provide this Annual Report pursuant to MGL Chapter 20, Section 6C(e) on the Council's ongoing work related to the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan (<http://mafoodsystem.org/plan/>). In 2018, the Council members continued to review and discuss its six priorities and goals during 2018 meetings as detailed below. Please accept this letter as the Council's Annual Report.

The Council respectfully requests that the Administration and the General Court support these broad goals and their underlying programs and link them to larger policy discussions. In many cases, agency members of the Council are already undertaking programs and projects that support the core goals of the Plan, and in some situations the Plan has provided guidance about where additional resources or efforts are needed. An additional White Paper was accepted by the Council on Education and Training, which continues the 2017 Council practice on deeper investigations into its highest priorities to amplify existing programs and services and focus on additional opportunities.

The Council appreciates the Administration's and the General Court's past support of the Plan's vision of a sustainable and equitable food system.

We ask that you give continued consideration to these priorities as relevant legislative and regulatory actions are developed. As always, members of the Council would be happy to meet with you or your staffs to offer further detail to these priorities, as well as review any parts of the Plan or our work to implement it.

Electronic versions of this Report and its attachments will also be provided to you forthwith.

Sincerely,

John Lebeaux
Commissioner and Chair, MA Food Policy Council

2018 Activities of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council

An Act Establishing the Massachusetts Food Policy Council was signed into law on November 7, 2010, which created the 17-member Council that was tasked with developing recommendations for food system goals for the Commonwealth. Pursuant to Section 6C(e) of Chapter 277 of the Acts of 2010, the Council must submit an annual report outlining its findings, conclusions, proposals, recommendations, and progress towards reaching the goals that have been set forth. In 2018, the MA Food Policy Council (FPC) focused on six topics from the MA Local Food Action Plan, forming the meeting themes for the year. The MA Local Food Action Plan was accepted by the FPC on December 10, 2015 and was designed to increase MA-grown food; create jobs and improve wages in food and farming; protect the land and water needed to produce food; ensure food safety, reduce waste, hunger, and food insecurity while making fresh and health food more accessible for the residents of the Commonwealth.

A new White Paper was developed and accepted on Education. Detailed minutes of all six meetings throughout the year and White Papers are available at the following link:

<https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-food-policy-council>

January 12, 2018, MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Westborough

MA Local Food Action Plan goal: Increase household buying power by further support for Healthy Incentive Program (HIP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation. Expand physical access to fresh, healthy and local foods by collaborating with various community stakeholders. Appropriate members of the Council and its partners should achieve goals and recommendations of the Plan by properly implementing, measuring, and analyzing initiatives with collaboration of the community.

The January meeting focused on discussions regarding the HIP White Paper, which included the need to review the definition of food insecurity and how the HIP program was successful, beyond the incentive, by changing the food purchasing habits of SNAP recipients. There was common focus on how to increase the consumption of local foods through programs such as the Food is Medicine Plan, the K-12 foodservice system, and Farm to School. There was agreement that a process to achieve specific goals, present measurable outcomes, analyze pertinent data, and communicate with the public is needed for the timeliness and success of reaching the goals of the Plan. The MA Food System Collaborative coordinated a three year review of progress by the public sector and the private sector in the second half of 2018 that shows the progress thus far in these areas. More detailed findings can be found at the following link: <https://www.mafoodsystem.org/resources/resourcehome/home/>.

March 23, 2018, MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Westborough

MA Local Food Action Plan goal: Increase production, sales and consumption of MA-grown foods. Ensure regulations support the growth of agriculture, identify regulations that hinder viability, and provide financial and technical support for farmers. Increase household buying power and expand physical access to fresh, healthy, and local food. Improve access to healthy food with better transportation and food infrastructure.

The MA HIP has been a very successful program, helping families across the Commonwealth access fresh and healthy food. At the time of the March FPC meeting, the future of the program was uncertain and discussions focused on how to keep the program running. Council members expressed desire to further support HIP and discussions presented the need to request funds for the program at sustainable levels. Presentations on recommendations for the 2018 Farm Bill brought about discussion for aspects applicable to Massachusetts, specifically SNAP and specialty crops. The FPC legislative members provided updates on food and agriculture legislations including: the Environmental Bond Bill and aquaculture, veterans and warriors program, “Breakfast after the Bell”, increasing dairy tax credit, the Energy Bill and anaerobic digesters, and enhancing culinary tourism options for farmers.

Since the March 2018 meeting, the MA HIP has been extended on a seasonal basis through 2019 so it can continue to help families across the Commonwealth.

May 4, 2018, UMass Amherst, Amherst

MA Local Food Action Plan goal: Support expanded educational opportunities for farmers and other food system workers. The current focus is to support Massachusetts higher education, UMASS Extension, and vocational technical schools by developing and offering appropriate curricula to meet food system needs. Efforts are being made to reduce hunger and increase availability of healthy foods by more HIP funding and promotion of SNAP.

At the May meeting, an up to date report on HIP showed continued program growth and funding support. Presentations at this meeting described the educational efforts contributing to a new program at the UMASS Amherst Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment. “Food Systems Literacy, Education, Future Farmers, and Food System Workers” program will focus on education for food and farming literacy preparing students for a variety of roles in the for-profit and non-profit food systems. The MA Food System Collaborative highlighted signs of progress for the food system in the budget. Also discussed was the idea of allowing farmers more input at local boards of health to more efficiently sell at farmers markets.

July 19, 2018, MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Westborough

MA Local Food Action Plan goal: Reduce food waste through state programs for farmers, restaurants, processors, schools, other institutions, and consumers. A current focus is to support the Commercial Food Waste Ban by developing policies and programs to divert food waste from landfills. Support for donation programs, conversion of food waste to animal feed, composting, and the development of anaerobic digestion facilities are also priorities. The distribution system will support opportunities for equitable access to fresh local food.

The July meeting began with agency updates, which included the HIP program. There was a discussion on the technology to credit EBT transitions. The technology program is being extended to early January 2019, while other solutions are identified by MA DTA and USDA to avoid a disruption of service. To focus

on the MA Local Food Action Plan food waste goal, an update was provided by MassDEP and industry representatives describing new innovations and increased capabilities. Considering that food is the biggest portion of trash, efforts that divert food material from disposal to higher value uses are important. Presentations focused on successful diversion of food material, increasing the proficiency of smaller composting businesses, and working with businesses to maximize economic and environmental benefits by implementing food waste programs and policies. A case study from Daily Table focused on tackling food waste by adding value to excess or short code foods. Daily Table provides a retail location in a low-income area, selling nutritionally based foods to customers at a deep discount. Another case study spotlighted El Harvey and Sons, a food repackaging operation successful in supplying material for anaerobic digesters.

September 21, 2018, MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Westborough

MA Local Food Action Plan goal: *Support and grow local food system infrastructure. Target opportunities to access capital, incentives, and technical assistance through agency partners/programs, private organizations, and universities.*

At the September meeting, a HIP update included news of DTA support for families affected by the gas explosions. Council members were encouraged to continue to support additional funding for this program. HIP will be moving to a seasonal basis and as a result of that, both grower and SNAP recipient impacts were discussed. Commissioner Ronald Amidon from the MA Department of Fish and Game (DFG) gave an overview of DFG and discussed opportunities to collaborate with the Council. The Education White paper was reviewed, discussed and subsequently approved at the November Council meeting. A speaker from The Carrot Project shared a presentation about local food infrastructure as a driver of economic development, based on a strong technical support network. The MA Food System Collaborative coordinated a review of the three-year progress by the public sector, which was released on Food Day, October 24, 2018. The full report can be found at the following link:

<https://mafoodsystem.org/projects/pubsecprogress2018/>

Work between the Council and the MA Food System Collaborative continues to network local food policy councils to share resources. A specific project is under development for additional HIP training at farmers markets. A tour by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (EOESE) with Congressman McGovern focused on raising awareness of the over 200 summer food programs. There were also several round tables re: summer meals and access. A new partnership with UMASS uses their food truck to provide summer meals.

November 1, 2018, State House, Boston

MA Local Food Action Plan goal: *Support increased purchases of Massachusetts grown and produced foods. The current focus is to support increased purchases of local foods by state institutions, public and private educational programs, and meals programs. Increased funding for state agency and institutional*

food procurement and standardized contract language for state and municipal purchasers, are also priorities. The local seafood system will be collaborative and networked increasing market share and customer purchases.

After Council recognition of the longtime guidance and support from Representative Steve Kulik, presentations were made by Just Roots and the Franklin County Food Council, Shape Up Somerville, and Farm to School, focusing on food security and health equity in communities and schools. Codman Academy's case study showed Farm to School having great success within the Dorchester community. The MA Food Collaborative provided statewide progress relating to the Plan. UMASS Boston emphasized the need to increase collaboration within the seafood industry to capitalize on this underutilized economic and protein resource. The recently launched MA Food Trust Program works like a non-profit bank, funding projects that increase healthy and affordable food. DTA is working to have a predictable model to maintain HIP consistently up and running.

MASSACHUSETTS FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (Council) (M.G.L. CHAPTER 20 § 6C)

CHAIRMAN

John Lebeaux, Commissioner, MDAR

STAFF LIAISON

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Late in 2010, Chapter 277 of the Acts of 2010 amended Massachusetts General Law Chapter 20 by inserting Section 6C, creating a 17-member Food Policy Council ("FPC"). The purpose of the council, detailed minutes and reports are at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/boards-commissions/food-policy-council.html>

STATE AGENCY MEMBERS

John Lebeaux, Commissioner, MDAR

Jay Ash, Secretary, Designee: Helena Fruscio, MEOHED

Dr. Monica Bharel, Commissioner, Designee: Lea Susan Ojamaa, MPH

Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, MDEP, Designee: Danah Tench

Jeff Riley, Commissioner, Designee: Robert Leshin, MESE

Jeff McCue, Commissioner, MDTA

Legislative members:

Senator Anne Gobi

Representative Hannah Kane

Senator Ryan Fattman
Representative Steve Kulik

Industry Members (appointed by the Governor):

Anna Goldenheim, MD, replaced Vivien Morris, MS, RD, MPH, LDN, Community based nutrition and public health expert

Jeff Cole, Executive Director, MA farmers markets, direct to consumer marketing

Eric Stocker, Food processor and distributor

Samuel S. Wong, PhD, REHS/RS, Local health department representative

John Lee, Allandale Farm, Farmer

Amanda Kinchla, MS, Food Safety Extension Specialist, UMASS Amherst

John Waite, Food processor and handler