

January 28, 2022

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 M.G.L. Chapter 20, Section 6C(e) on the Council's ongoing work related to the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan ("Plan") (<http://mafoodsystem.org/plan/>).

Please accept this letter as the Council's 2021 Annual Report. Throughout the year, Council members continued to work towards the priorities and goals from the Plan. With the Plan's recommendations continuing to be very relevant, the pandemic continued to challenge the Council and partners to support the Massachusetts food system during wide disruptions. Topics focused on racial equity, reducing hunger, food insecurity, agricultural sector support, and programs to offset the wide challenges within the food system.

Council meetings during 2021 had strong participation as continued allowance of public meetings conducted through virtual means allowed real-time public access. The collaborative relationship between the Council, the MA Legislature's Food System Caucus, the MA Food System Collaborative, local food policy councils, and other stakeholders continues to be an asset to develop and support policy and program recommendations. The Council's wide stakeholder group complemented continued representation on the Governor's Food Security Task Force. Having communications and relationships in place from the Council was an asset for efficiency in their work.

The Council respectfully requests that the Administration and the General Court continue to support the Plan's broad goals and their underlying programs and link them to larger policy discussions. In addition, 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 support as relevant legislative and regulatory actions are developed. As always, members of the Council would be happy to meet with you or your staff to offer further detail on support for the Massachusetts food system 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
Chair, Massachusetts Food Policy Council

2021 Annual Report:

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 2021, the MA Food Policy Council (FPC) focused on food access and racial equity, forming the meeting themes for the year. There was agreement to revive the FPC's Advisory Committee beginning next year. Throughout the year, Council members continued to review the priorities and goals from the Plan. With the Plan's recommendations continuing to be very relevant, the 2019 coronavirus outbreak challenged the Council and partners to support the Massachusetts food system during wide disruptions. Topics focused on reducing hunger, food insecurity, racial equity, agricultural sector support, and programs to offset the wide challenges within the food system. Detailed minutes of all meetings throughout the year are available at: <https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-food-policycouncil>

Meetings continued to be held remotely. On March 10, 2020, Governor Baker, acting pursuant to the power provided by Chapter 639 of the Acts of 1950 and Section 2A of Chapter 17 of the Massachusetts General Laws, declared a State of Emergency due to the outbreak of the 2019 coronavirus ("COVID-19"), allowing public meetings to be conducted through virtual means to allow real-time public access. This was updated pursuant to the provisions for adequate alternative public access to agency hearings, set forth in Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 and Governor Charles D. Baker's COVID Executive Order No. 1 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, s. 20, dated March 12, 2020, which was extended by COVID Executive Order No. 69, Massachusetts Food Policy Council ("FPC") meetings continue to be conducted through virtual means to allow real-time public access.

The MA Local Food Action Plan (Plan) was accepted by the FPC on December 10, 2015. The Plan 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 healthy food more accessible for the residents of the Commonwealth. The Plan offers recommendations for the public and private sectors to see these goals through to fruition and continues to be an important foundation for this work.

State Agency Members:

John Lebeaux, Commissioner, MDAR; Michael Kennealy, Secretary, Designee: Helena Fruscio and Bobby Mallin, MEOHED; Margret R. Cooke, acting Commissioner MPH, Designee: Lea Susan Ojamaa; Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, MDEP, Designee: Danah Tench; Jeff Riley, Commissioner, MESE, Designee: Robert Leshin; Amy Kershaw, Commissioner, MDTA

Legislative members:

Senator Joanne Comerford, Senator Ryan Fattman, Representative Dan Donahue, Representative Hannah Kane

Industry Members (appointed by the Governor):

Amanda Kinchla, M.S., Food Safety Extension Specialist, UMASS Amherst; John Lee, Allandale Farm, Farmer; Mackenzie May, Direct to consumer; John Waite, Food processor and handler

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