DLS
DIVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES
MA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

Geoffrey E. Snyder
Commissioner of Revenue
Sean R. Cronin
Senior Deputy Commissioner

March 29, 2024

FVAC Recommended Values — FY 2025

To Boards of Assessors:

The Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission (FVAC) met on March 14th, 2024. For Fiscal Year 2025, the Commission adopted a range of agricultural, horticultural, and forest land use values for various categories of land classified under *Chapter 61 and 61A*.

The FVAC voted to accept approved valuation models that included use of capitalized farmland rents and historical averages. Sourced economic data was reviewed from the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) which publishes data on Massachusetts farmland. For FY25, the FVAC approved an increase of 8.8% in acreage values of Chapter 61A land and increase of 9.7% for nonproductive land. For Chapter 61 productive woodland, the FVAC, specific to FY25, voted to approve **one** rate throughout the Commonwealth, with an average indicated decrease of 19% over the previous year's value. Christmas trees values are set to forestry and decreased by 19%.

The FVAC voted to continue the existing five category cranberry production range. Assessors are advised to review the specific yield reported by growers on the Chapter 61A application and adjust rates accordingly. The FVAC voted to accept data which indicated an 8.9% increase in cranberry values over the previous year.

In 2016 the Municipal Modernization Act provided that cranberry bogs classified as agricultural/horticultural under M.G.L. c. 61A, will be considered actively devoted to cranberry production until FY20 even without production of a crop or annual minimum gross sales requirement under M.G. L. c. 61A § 3, and provided the property is maintained during the designated time period. Subsequently, this has been extended to 2024 as amended by Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020, see section 87. *In the absence of further legislation, this will expire at the end of fiscal year 2024.*

In valuing land classified as agricultural, horticultural, or productive woodland under Chapter 61 and 61A, the Board of Assessors must consider only those indicia of value that such land has for specific agricultural, horticultural or forest use. The FVAC presented range of values are utilized in conjunction with the Assessors' appraisal knowledge, judgment, and experience as to a municipality agricultural, horticultural and forest value. Consideration of values outside the range recommended by the FVAC must be supported by a comprehensive study of local factors influencing value, together with a detailed description of selected valuation models and resulting use value estimates. Any sales of farmland, income data, or other appraisal information being considered by Assessors should be limited to data specific to the crop or product being grown or produced.

Along with the FVAC recommended land values, the FVAC approved the value of farm animals for the purpose of *Farm Animal Excise* (Chapter 59§8A) determined by the Department of Revenue. For FY25, the FVAC deemed no change made to values of farm animal excise and no change to crop development times.

Sincerely yours,

Christopher Wilcock

Christopher Wilcock
FVAC Chairman; Bureau Chief, Bureau of Local Assessment, Department of Revenue

FVAC Members: *Phillip DeMartino, Executive office of Housing and Livable Communities; Peter Church, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Forestry Division; Gerard Kennedy, Department of Agricultural Resources; Bernie Morzuch, University of Massachusetts, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences; Alice Wozniak, Assessors Representative (TA)*