



**Organizational Sign-on Letter Supporting
S.838/H.3327 An Act encouraging the donation of food to persons in need**

May 10, 2018

The Honorable Jeffrey Sánchez, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Sánchez,

The undersigned organizations urge the House Committee on Ways and Means to report out favorably S.838/H.3327, An Act encouraging the donation of food to persons in need. These bills eliminate barriers to donating healthy food to low income residents by extending liability protection to restaurants, organizations and individuals donating food. The bills also provide a capped tax deduction to farmers donating healthy local food.

Based on the experiences of other states that have passed similar measures, these bills present a cost-effective way to increase the fresh, healthy, local food available to families in need, while reducing edible food waste and providing financial incentives to farmers. 10.1 million tons of edible food is wasted on U.S. farms each year, representing a missed opportunity to distribute that resource to low-income families. Many farmers do not donate their harvest because the cost of food donation, including staff time and transportation costs, is too high.

Financial incentives result in more donations by farmers and others. To encourage food donation, the federal government has made many businesses eligible for tax deductions or tax credits for the food they donate. When it expanded the types of businesses that were eligible for tax deductions for their food donations in 2005, donations increased by 137% the following year.

However, many small farms - including many in Massachusetts - struggle to claim the federal tax deductions because of low profit margins. To address this issue and ensure that low income residents receive more healthy food, seven states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, and Oregon) and the District of Columbia have increased financial incentives for farmers who donate their crops.

California has found that every dollar in tax credit to farmers leverages approximately 10-20 pounds of donated food. Incentivizing farmers to donate more food is a cost effective way to increase the consumption of healthy food among low income people, leading to better health outcomes and lower health costs.

We appreciate the Committee taking up these issues and urge you to report these bills out favorably. Our organizations are available to provide additional information and connections to practitioners and advocates who can offer further details, at the pleasure of the Committee.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Berkshire Grown, Great Barrington
Bill Emerson Food Donation Act Awareness Campaign, Bernardston
Boston Area Gleaners, Inc., Waltham
Central Mass Grown, Worcester
CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture), South Deerfield
CommonWealth Kitchen, Boston
Community Servings, Jamaica Plain
Conservation Law Foundation, Boston
Daily Table, Dorchester
Food For Free, Cambridge
Food Link, Inc., Arlington
Island Grown Initiative, West Tisbury
Lovin' Spoonfuls Food Rescue, Boston
Project Bread-Walk for Hunger, East Boston
Rachel's Table, Worcester
Sail Martha's Vineyard, Vineyard Haven
Soil 4 Climate, Boston
Somerville Homeless Coalition, Somerville
Spoiler Alert, Boston
The Campus Kitchen at UMass Boston, Boston
The Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston
The Open Door, Gloucester
Tufts Food Rescue Collaborative, Medford
Worcester County Food Bank, Shrewsbury