

Hello,

My name is Breanne and I am a citizen who cares a lot about the local food system. Food is essential for all of us--to survive, to grow strong and healthy, and to thrive mentally and physically. I farmed for 7 years on small organic family farms that struggled to keep their business afloat every year, while their neighbors who farmed for big ag got subsidies for growing acres and acres of corn and soy, and spraying chemicals year round.

RI has approximately 80 urban farms and over 170 small farms, but these farms are excluded from receiving the tax benefits that larger farms enjoy. Despite this, small farms are the fastest growing segment of our farming community (USDA 2022 Ag Census).

Our farmland is also the most expensive in the country, making RI one of the hardest states to farm in. But our farmers are trying to make it work to provide fresh, low/no cost food, nutrition education, job training, and a wealth of social activities to their communities. They provide so many public health benefits in addition to being small businesses that are feeding us. They could continue to support our community if they received the same tax incentives as bigger farms.

I would greatly appreciate your support in getting bill H5534 passed so that small farms could have the same tax incentives currently afforded to larger farms.

Thank you,
Breanne Penkala