

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Farm Fresh Rhode Island in strong support of H5534, a bill that would extend essential tax benefits to Rhode Island's small and urban farms.

Rhode Island's tax laws governing farms were written 40 years ago when the agricultural landscape looked very different. Today, we are home to a vibrant and growing network of small and urban farms—more than 250 across the state—that play a vital role in feeding our communities, stewarding our environment, and building a stronger local economy. Unfortunately, these farms are currently excluded from the tax relief available to larger farms, despite facing many of the same financial pressures.

As the fastest-growing segment of Rhode Island's agricultural community, small and urban farms provide so much more than food. They offer job training, nutrition education, public health benefits, and climate resilience in neighborhoods that need them most. H5534 is a smart, fair update to Rhode Island's tax code that ensures these farms can continue to grow and thrive.

The bill is thoughtfully crafted, with strong eligibility requirements to ensure only legitimate small farms benefit. This legislation will give our smallest farms a fighting chance to stay viable. At this critical time when Rhode Island farms are losing support from the federal government, please vote yes on H5534.

Thank you for your consideration.

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