

Chai Thao
126 Althea St
Providence, RI 02907

April 3, 2024

Chairman Marvin Abney
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill 7684 | Senate Bill 2335- At the Southside Community Land Trust we work with a network of 35 small and urban farmers and more than 400 community gardeners. These farmers and gardeners are often BIPOC, immigrants with English as their second language and immense expertise in growing and distributing fresh food. A number of these farmers took some time out of their farming to share some words about what it would mean to them to see this bill passed.

I'm writing because I live in Providence and I have been farming in Cranston since 2019. I farm because I want to make a living working with my family and grow food for my community. The food I grow goes to farmer's markets in Providence and to community organizations in low-income neighborhoods. I recently received a sales tax exemption for my farm business. For many years as we started our business we paid sales tax on farm supplies that other more established farmers don't have to pay. This money could have been invested to help me be more independent and help my business grow. Now that I have the exemption, it has already saved me money on buying equipment that I can reinvest in my business. Many new and smaller farms still do not have this exemption and they can't buy much needed supplies or invest in tools to help their business grow.

This is important to me because I want to grow more healthy food for my community, and for my neighbors to be able to do the same.

In order to continue doing this work, I am asking you to please help pass House Bill 7684 / Senate Bill 2335 which would make tax relief programs available for small and urban farms. The Small and Urban Farms Success Act to ensure that I maintain a livelihood and Rhode Islander's have access to food.

Signed,

Chai Thao

Name

Daily Farm

Farm Business Name