

Chairman Marvin Abney
House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H 7684

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nayeema Eusuf. I am a resident of Cranston. I sell vegetables, herbs and fruit that I grow on a 1/10th acre market garden in Cranston.

I am writing in support of equitable tax benefits for small and urban farms, whose social benefits and ecosystem services are often overlooked due to size.

I believe that small and urban farms are integral to the food security of our small state in a climate uncertain future. They are repositories of knowledge and tools for growing healthy food at low cost and in limited space. They are laboratories where we can experiment to see which crops thrive in our rapidly changing environment.

Small and urban farms bring people of different socioeconomic strata – as farmers, apprentices and volunteers - together by giving them a place in nature where they can bond over shared work and literally find common ground. Small and urban farms teach us the value of biodiversity, as we see wildlife species at work and play up close as they come to find forage and nest materials. As forestlands disappear, small and urban farms – which are typically chemical-free and which include hedgerows and woodlands - will certainly become critical habitats for pollinators, songbirds and small mammals.

Small and urban farms are also important as a sink for all the excess rainwater we have been experiencing, as well being as a carbon sink when composting is practiced. Most importantly, small and urban farms are an expression of care work, that we all need to thrive.

Passing H 7684 will give recognition to the unique and essential earth stewardship services provided by small and urban farms.

Sincerely,

Nayeema Eusuf
Cranston, RI