**Cumberland County Food Security Council Meeting Notes**

**Thursday, May 10, 2018, 9:30-11:30 am**

**U ME Cooperative Extension Office, 75 Clearwater Drive, Falmouth**

**Notes**

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| **Opening*** **Attendance**: Jim Hanna, Robert Deacon, Kayla Jones, Brie Bowman, Mary Turner, Kristina Kalolo, Scott Hamann, Clara McConnell, Kathryn Sargent, Richard Rudolph
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| **CCFSC Updates:**501C3 Status* Closing the Hunger Gap with Local Food Report
* Portland Public Schools Food Security Task Force
	+ Supporting policy work at the school district level
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| **Policy Updates****•** State: Scott Hamann and Clara McConnell* Program called **Let’s Grow Maine** - scales up the Mainers Feeding Mainers program to 100%
	+ The full meal gap in the state is 44 million lbs; 11-13 million lbs need still remaining after charitable food system
	+ On average $0.50/lb produce and distributing through emergency food network
	+ The governor would initiate the program and Finance Authority of Maine and would put out RFPs for organizations that could manage the contracts
		- Recommendations of where that food would go - governor would appoint food security council and representatives that would be responsible for evaluating their area (the amount of food that is needed and what infrastructure is needed)
		- FAM would put out RFPs for the various aspects (transportation, infrastructure, etc.)
	+ Ensuring that experts are at table advising the governor’s office - the group emphasized the importance of having farmers, and small farmers in particular, at the table to discuss a fair price point
	+ Interest from many gubernatorial candidates
	+ It would be a $7 million appropriation
		- By closing tax loopholes trying they would be able to find $10 million (using additional $3 million for community gardens, nutrition education, and cooking classes)
		- Bolstering SNAP and FINI
		- There has not been an economic impact analysis yet
		- Creating a Farm to Food Fund to be held at the state’s office
* **Federal: Representative Pingree’s office** - updates from Emily Horton attached to the end of these notes
	+ House Farm Bill is up for a vote next week (if we don’t see a vote it indicates a struggle to get the votes from the Freedom Caucus) - completely partisan all Republican
		- Includes drastic provisions to cut $17 billion in SNAP benefits over a 10 year period
	+ The Senate is working on a bipartisan version of the Farm Bill
	+ Congress will then conference the two Farm Bills and come up with a compromise
		- Clara believes that they won’t have time for the conference process before the election and will most likely extend the current Farm Bill
	+ Maine has real stories of what could happen on a nationwide scale if these larger SNAP cuts and work requirements pass through Congress
* **Potential Proactive Policy Initiatives and Work Group Formation**
	+ Jim recommends reconvening a ‘Policy Committee’ and going up to Augusta quarterly - begin meeting in June
	+ Putting together a food security platform that marries together some of the current work already out there
		- Tying in Maine Farmland Trust’s agricultural platform
		- Helping to build a comprehensive and holistic approach to the Let’s Grow Maine program
		- Good Shepherd has a SNAP leadership group (focused federally)
		- Finding ways to work with other networks to build advocacy capacity (Maine People’s Alliance, MCEP, MEJP)
	+ Rebuilding the SNAP program
		- Reverse the asset test
		- What waivers they can put into place (disabilities, veterans, homeless, care givers)
	+ Funding for the charitable food sector
	+ Forming relationships with new politicians in November
* **State session ended (and was not extended) and everything that passed and is in appropriations is in now limbo**
	+ This includes important bills around the opioid crisis, increasing wages for direct care workers, education funding, etc.
	+ Hoping that they will return for a special session but Clara suspects that it will be tight for a supplemental spending package and not address the 100+ bills in appropriations (will most likely focus on education funding, direct care wages, HSSA bills)
		- A special session costs twice as much to the taxpayer as just extending the session ($18,000 a day)
		- Funding expires July 1st, so these need to be resolved before then
	+ Good Shepherd is waiting hear back about funding support for themselves and their partners (ask was $2.5 million)
	+ Preble Street is waiting to hear back on their Housing First Bill
	+ Scott’s Meals on Wheels bill is sitting at appropriations
	+ Sara Gideon will be speaker next session - she is well informed and cares deeply about food security
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| **Equity and Economic/Racial Justice:*** Racial Equity Institute trainings
	+ Strong focus on historical analysis
	+ Lack of intersectionality
* Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation Work Group Formation
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| **Closing*** Other announcements
* Upcoming events
	+ Policy Symposium, March 30
	+ MNCFC Summit, April 13
	+ REI Training, June
* Next meetings: Schedule for 2018
* Full Council: May 10, July 12, September 13, November 8
* Leadership Team/Board of Directors: June 14, August 9, October 11, December 13
* **Annual Meeting: October 16**
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Below are some highlights of what's in the proposed House Farm Bill that was put together by National sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) and National Farmers Union (NFU)

**Local and Regional Food Systems & Rural Development**

Glad to see:

• Increase in mandatory funding for Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives Program: provides $275 million over 5 years, establishes permanent baseline.

Mixed bag:

• Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program reauthorized but proposed expansion to include low-income veterans and commensurate increase in funding not included.

Flat funding $20.6m/yr mandatory.

• Food Safety Outreach Program reauthorized but not provided any mandatory funding; proposed policy changes to the program were not included that would enhance community-based organizations' ability to access the program.

• Gives USDA authority to conduct pilots to test mobile technology for SNAP benefits which could provide new methods for accepting SNAP at farmers markets, CSAs etc.

Of concern:

• Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program reauthorized but provided no mandatory funding (2014 Farm Bill provided $30m/yr mandatory).

• Value-added Producer Grants Program reauthorized but provided no mandatory funding (2014 Farm Bill provided $63 million in a mandatory lump sum to be spent over 5 years).

• National Organic Certification Cost Share Program eliminated: no reauthorization, no mandatory or discretionary funding.

• Rural Energy for America Program reauthorized but permanent baseline funding of $50m/yr eliminated.

• Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program reauthorized but provided no mandatory funding (2014 Farm Bill provided $3m/yr mandatory).

Not included:

• Proposed Food Safety Cost Share Program not included.

• No-cost provision on geographic preference to support farm-to-school initiatives not included.

• Proposed Harvesting Health Pilot (produce prescriptions) not included.

**Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers**

Glad to see:

• Continues existing mandatory funding for Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) of $20m/yr, includes new priorities on land access, succession planning, food safety; waiver to matching funds requirement

• New farmland data initiative included

• Expands crop insurance benefits for beginning farmers enrolling in Whole Farm Revenue Protection insurance

• Continued funding for the Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives Program (CRP-TIP)

• Establishes the Commission on Farm Transitions to study issues around access to land, credit, and risk management tools, as well as to explore potential incentives to facilitate farm transfers

Mixed bag:

• Continued funding for the Outreach and Assistance for Local Farmers and Ranchers (2501) Program, but no increase. Includes a new priority/carve-out for youth education projects

Of concern:

• No permanent baseline funding for BFRDP, 2501 or CRP-TIP

• No mandatory funding for Individual Development Accounts, Value-Added Producer Grant Program, Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program

• Raises loan limits on guaranteed loans to $1.75 million but no changes to direct loans

**Conservation - Including Working Lands Conservation Programs**

Glad to see:

• Increased funding for Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

• Elimination of livestock carve-out within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

• Continuation of CRP-TIP

Of concern:

• Repeals Regional Equity provision

• Allows 100% forested land to be eligible for ACEP-Agricultural Land Easements

• Elimination of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). ("Stewardship Contracts" added to EQIP to replace CSP do not retain the core features of CSP)

• Funding for the two major working lands programs, EQIP and CSP, would be cut by nearly $5 billion over 10 years

• Conservation Reserve Program acreage increase comes at the expense of payment rates and incentive payments within the continuous CRP enrollment, which would have negative implications for new conservation buffers and partial field enrollments

**Research**

Glad to see:

• Organic Agriculture Research & Extension Initiative (OREI) - $10m increase in mandatory funding (up to $30m/yr), includes soil health priority

Of concern:

• Reauthorization of SARE, AFRI, OREI, SCRI, BFRDP but funding increase only for OREI

Not included:

• No components of H.R. 5208 (Seeds for the Future Act) included

**Crop Insurance and Commodities**

Glad to see:

• Extension of beginning farmer crop insurance discounts to 10 years for Whole Farm Revenue Protection policy.

Of concern:

• Elimination of Risk Management Education Partnership program

Not included:

• No significant provisions to expand access to crop insurance for diversified, organic, and direct-to-market producers through improvements to Whole Farm Revenue Protection, NAP, or outreach and training programs.

Provided by

Emily K. Horton

District Representative

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (ME-01)

(207) 774-5019

[Emily.Horton@mail.house.gov](https://webmail.twc.com/do/mail/message/mailto?to=Emily.Horton%40mail.house.gov)