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Healthy Incentives Program Suspension Scheduled to End Two Months Earlier than Expected

Boston, MA – The Massachusetts Food System Caucus is excited to announce that this morning Governor Baker signed the supplemental budget passed in the House and Senate last week. The supplemental budget contains \$2 million in funding for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) as well as language requiring the program operate year-round. The passage of the supplemental budget lifts the current HIP suspension that has been ongoing since February 23rd and was scheduled to continue through May 15th. The Department of Transitional Assistance is working hard to resume HIP operations by this coming weekend.

The MA Food System Caucus has been a proud supporter of HIP since its launch in 2017. The program is highly effective at battling food insecurity. HIP helps SNAP clients buy fresh, healthy, and local produce for their household by providing them with \$1 back on their EBT card for each dollar spent on eligible fruits and vegetables, up to a monthly limit. HIP retailers include approved farmer's markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) farm share programs. The program is critical in providing underserved households with healthy food and supporting local farmers.

The Food System Caucus and the Department of Transitional Assistance are working hard together through ongoing meetings and communication to ensure HIP operates reliably moving forward. A consistent HIP benefits clients, farmers, and the Commonwealth economy.

The Food System Caucus is the MA Legislature's second largest caucus, behind the Democratic Caucus, with 131 members. It is co-chaired by Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury), Representative Daniel Donahue (D-Worcester), Representative Paul Schmid III (D-Westport), Senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton), Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer), and Senator Eric Lesser (D-Longmeadow). On behalf of the entire Food System Caucus, the Co-chairs thank House and Senate leadership for their support and Governor Baker for signing the supplemental budget.

More information about the Healthy Incentives Program is available through the Mass.Gov website: <https://www.mass.gov/healthy-incentives-program-hip>

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