Bill No.: SB-252
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT FOOD POLICY COUNCIL.
Vote Date: 3/29/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/25/2019
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Government Administration and Elections Committee

Co-Sponsors
Sen. Marilyn V. Moore, 22nd Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:
The Connecticut Food Council has struggled in recent years to remain relevant, struggled to meet quorum, struggled to get appointments and struggled to access funds allocated to it through the Community Investment Act. Resurrecting the Connecticut Food Council will help to strengthen food policy.

Substitute Language LCO No.6708: Existing council members terms are terminated as of June 30, 2019. This bill increases the membership and duties of the Connecticut Food Policy Council effective July 1, 2019. Membership is increased from 12 members to 19 members to include the Departments of Energy and Environmental Protection, Consumer Protection and Economic and Community Development and the UCONN extension.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Sen. Marilyn V. Moore, 22nd Dist.: My interest in sponsoring this legislation is the result of being part of a network of food workers, aggregators, growers, fisheries, farmers and others who work collaboratively to address the issue of food access and sustainability in the New England states over the past six years. First as a breast cancer advocate seeking to ensure all women have access to healthy foods and secondly, by joining two organizations that focus on food sustainability; Ct Food Alliance and Food Solutions New England. This bill will provide a needed update to statutory language, such as adding state agencies that were not
included when the council was established. The bill will ensure that there is broad representation across the state through the inclusion of 8 members that through commissions, councils or coalitions are focused on food issues.

**Josh Geballe, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services (DAS):** The Department of Administrative Services no longer has any involvement in the federal food program. The responsibility lies with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education. DAS respectfully requests its removal from the Connecticut Food Council.

**Melody A. Currey, Acting Commissioner, Department of Agriculture (DoAG):** An increase on the Food Council and greater participation from food commissions can be positive. The proposed bill would remove two current appointments; a Food Retailer and a Produce Wholesale. Given the sectors of the food system included in the current Council, and with the stated intent of SB 252 to strengthen the Council, DoAg believes the appointments of a Food Retailer and a Produce Wholesaler should be retained. DoAg recommends extending 3 year terms to 4 years to coincide with executive branch tenure; specify a quorum.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Meg Hourigan, Coordinator, Connecticut Food System Alliance:** Local food policy councils, commissions and collaboratives’ exist throughout the state in such diverse communities as Hartford, New London County and Stamford. These are voices that must be heard at the state level if we hope to address economic and climate change challenges to our food system. SB 252 would integrate local action with state – level policy making so Connecticut can develop food policy at a level that matches the complexity of our food system from the production and import of food to the consumption and disposal of food.

**Dawn Crayco, Connecticut Program Director, Food Corps:** Food Corps Connecticut has twenty AmeriCorps service members working throughout Connecticut communities and in over thirty-five high-need Connecticut schools. Food Corps also leads a statewide effort to increase farm to school efforts in our state called the CT Farm to School Collaborative. A revitalized council with updated statutory language could be great service to Food Corps’ work to increase healthy food education and access in schools throughout the state. We are interested in contributing to efforts to make healthy food access and awareness part of the everyday school experience for all Connecticut students. The updated statutory language and structure of the food policy council make it possible to see how an organization such as Food Corps can participate in efforts to elevate and improve students’ food experience.

**Martha Page, Executive Director, Hartford Food System:** This bill describes a strong state level council that serves as a convener of local councils, that helps to define areas of common interest and potentially elevate for state consideration those issues that cross Connecticut geographies and that impact a broad cross-section of our state residents. The structure and expanded membership as described in this bill will make that important work easier to accomplish. Connecticut is lagging behind other New England states in developing and implementing state food planning that would strengthen our food system in all aspects, from production, to distribution, to access to labor toward a stronger and more vibrant food economy.
Cara Donovan, member of Stamford Food Collaborative and the Danbury Food Collaborative: The changes to the Connecticut Food Policy Council proposed in SB 52 expand representation of state agencies and local food commissions/networks in a unique space where local practitioners, such as food bank staff, nutritionists and farmers can connect and work closely with the state agencies that relate to food policy, including the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Social Services.

Jean King, Watertown, CT: Connecticut has many local councils and organizations across the state working on food policy. This bill brings the Departments of Consumer Protection, Energy and Environment and Economic Development to the Council. It is important to bring together those working across the state at the local levels to share information and progress. Now is the right time to revitalize the state council.

Jiff Martin, Mansfield, CT: SB 52 will provide a much-needed update to the 1997 statute that created the Connecticut Food Policy Council. It will make it easier for the state to effectively respond to critical and emerging needs related to food and nutrition.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Maureen O'Reilly
Assistant Clerk

Date: April 10, 2019