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September 16, 2025

House Chair Natalie Blais
Joint Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries
Attn: Jacob Kaminsky
State House, Room 473F
Boston, MA 02133

Senate Chair Dylan Fernandes
State House, Room 519
Boston, MA 02133

via email: jointcmte-Agriculture@malegislature.gov

RE: Support for H.121/S.61 – *An Act relative to urban farmland*

Dear Chair Blais, Chair Fernandes and Honorable Members of the Joint Committee:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition (MLTC), I am pleased to submit written testimony in support of H.121/S.61, *An Act relative to urban farmland*. MLTC is a non-profit association that works to advance land conservation in Massachusetts by supporting and strengthening over 140 conservation land trusts that work to preserve vital natural resources across the Commonwealth. In addition to stewarding thousands of acres of their own across Massachusetts, land trusts leverage their deep connections with communities and landowners to assist municipalities and state agencies to conserve open space.

MLTC strongly supports this bill because it would facilitate converting more vacant lots into urban farms, community gardens, or other agricultural enterprises, with benefits in economic development, increased food security, and community vibrance. The bill is structured to particularly benefit environmental justice communities. Vacant lots create a drain on municipal budgets and frequently create nuisances for the community. Many of our member land trusts are well positioned to collaborate with farmers, gardeners, municipalities and allied non-profits to return these lots to productive use.

I urge you to report this bill favorably. If I can provide additional information as you consider it, please don't hesitate to contact me at robb@massland.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robb Johnson
Executive Director, Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition