

# U.S. Rep. Moore: Introduces bill to boost urban agriculture

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**Washington, DC**—Today, Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-04) was joined by Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (HI-02) and Bobby Rush (IL-01) in introducing H.R.5266, the Urban Agriculture Healthy Food and Entrepreneur Act. This bill would establish two new programs — the Urban Agriculture Conservation Easement Program and the Urban Agriculture Microentrepreneur Assistance Program. Together they would increase the availability of land and capital in communities to encourage more local urban agriculture production.

“Food insecurity is a public health issue that harms the most vulnerable. This legislation helps urban communities meet their nutritional needs with resources produced in their own backyards,” **said Rep. Gwen Moore**. “Increasing resources for urban agriculture will create healthier communities and produce local jobs that support the economy.”

“In too many cities across America, families are living in food deserts with very little access to healthy food that is affordable and nutritious, thereby negatively impacting their health and wellbeing. My legislation will help address these challenges by empowering local communities and entrepreneurs to create urban farms and gardens, beautifying their neighborhoods, supporting new small business opportunities, creating local jobs, and enabling stronger, healthier communities,” **said Rep. Tulsi Gabbard**.

“Food deserts are a serious problem facing my constituents, as are ‘food swamps,’ or areas where unhealthy fast-food options far outnumber healthier alternatives. Both put communities, particularly communities of color, at heightened risk for severe health problems such as obesity, high blood pressure, and type two diabetes,” **said Rep. Bobby Rush**. “This legislation will help empower urban communities to address the root causes of food insecurity, as well as the resulting public health issues that follow, all while restoring neighborhoods with functional greenspace and creating jobs.”

“Putting land and capital back into the hands of people in the community and supporting the growth of community-led urban agriculture businesses takes us one step closer to a just food and farm system that ensures the right to nutritious food for all people and ensures their human dignity and independence,” **said Noreen Springstead, WhyHunger’s Executive Director**. “WhyHunger is stepping up to endorse the Urban Agriculture Healthy Food and Entrepreneur Act because we know ending hunger and its root causes starts with policies that put the people most impacted by hunger in the driver seat.”

“This bill’s benefits will extend far beyond urban agriculture. Research shows that funding programs, such as Farm to School help farmers in urban and rural areas and breathes life into local economies. Most importantly such programs provide our kids with fresh, healthy food and a chance to learn about where that food comes from,” **said Sarah Reinhardt, lead food systems and health analyst at the Union of Concerned Scientists**. “The bill is a smart investment, and it’s going to meet the needs of a lot of people who want to take part in Farm to School, but haven’t had the means to be able to do so.”

“Access to land is among the biggest barriers to food sovereignty in urban environments. As city demographics rapidly shift across the country, it’s more vital than ever for communities to be able to access the resources they need—such as land and capital—to sustain themselves,” **said Ruth Tyson, coalition coordinator at Good Food For All Coalition**. “Representative Gabbard’s bill supports urban agriculture projects led by and for community members, creating more opportunities for community-driven development and ownership.”

“America is an incredibly diverse country that benefits from a diverse agricultural system in many ways. Variety not only fosters resilience, for example, it also improves access and equity by ensuring all people – regardless of where they live – have access to fresh, local food,” **said Wes King, Senior Policy Specialist at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**. “The Urban Agriculture Healthy Food and Entrepreneur Act (UAHFE) would support the growing number of individuals, communities, and small businesses who have a passion for agriculture in cities across the nation. By improving access to land, access to capital, and supporting vital public programs that enhance community food security, UAHFE will help our cities and towns to grow and prosper.”

“Urban agriculture has long served a critical role in healthy food access, community development, and environmental resiliency in neighborhoods across the country,” **said Qiana Mickie, Executive Director of Just Food**. “Access to land and resources have remained barriers to innovations in community based urban agriculture and enterprise. Just Food supports the Urban Agriculture Healthy Food and Entrepreneur Act (UAHFE) bill because it is legislation that will help direct resources to spur innovation, entrepreneurship, and land tenure in urban communities that have been historically and economically marginalized.”

“Urban agriculture has many proven benefits, including fighting hunger, decreasing families’ stress and mental fatigue, and increasing both mental and physical health. People have been growing food in cities for decades, but infrastructure to support their success has not been in place so they often face barriers including maintaining stable land tenure and accessing capital to improve their operations,” **said Nicole Surgerman, Policy Manager for the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group**. “The Urban Agriculture Healthy Food and Entrepreneur Act (UAHFE) would provide critical support to the urban agriculture sector by providing capital, preserving and facilitating growers’ access to land, and offering programmatic aid. By bringing federal support to this longstanding movement, UAHFE will support community resiliency and green urban environments in cities and towns across the US.”

**Background:** In addition to creating two new programs — the Urban Agriculture Conservation Easement Program and the Urban Agriculture Microentrepreneur Assistance Program — H.R.5266, the Urban Agriculture Healthy Food and Entrepreneur Act would also extend the authority of the Community Food Project Grant Program by \$15 million annually. It would also increase funding for the Farm to Schools Program by \$10 million.

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Union of Concerned Scientists, Good Food For All, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, Just Food, and WhyHunger all support this legislation.