



Building Blocks of a Massachusetts Rural Agenda



Presented by:

Senator Jo Comerford
Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester District

Representative Natalie M. Blais
1st Franklin District



1. Provide real and lasting support to farms and the commonwealth's food system.

Bill Number(s):

H.88/S.42: An Act Strengthening Local Food Systems – Rep. Blais/Sen. Comerford

H.3269: An Act to enhance agricultural operations – Rep. Blais

H.753/S.490: An Act relative to agricultural disaster relief – Rep. Blais/Sen. Gobi

S.2241: An Act to ensure financial viability in the transportation of farm goods – Sen. Gobi



2. Adapt state policies and programs to address housing challenges in rural communities.

Bill Number(s):

S.1771: An Act granting a local option for a real estate transfer fee to fund affordable housing – *Sen. Comerford*

H.2788: An Act empowering cities/towns to impose a mansion fee to support affordable housing – *Rep. Fernandes*

H.2894/S.1799: An Act providing for climate change adaptation infrastructure and affordable housing investments in the Commonwealth – *Rep. Montaña/Sen. Eldridge*



3. Transform local and regional public health.

Bill Number(s):

H.2204/S.1334: An Act relative to accelerating improvements to the local and regional public health system to address disparities in the delivery of public health services (SAPHE 2.0) – *Reps. Kane & Garlick/Sen. Comerford*



4. Establish and fund an Office of Rural Policy.

Bill Number(s):

H.403/S.233: An Act Relative to the Rural Policy Advisory Commission – *Rep. Blais/Sen. Mark*



5. Establish and fund a municipal building authority.

Bill Number(s):

HD.3675/S1489: Municipal and Public Safety Building Authority – *Rep. Blais/Sen. Comerford*



6. Build municipal capacity by investing in municipal officials and administrations.

Bill Number(s):

H.3040/S.2024: An Act to modernize participation in public meetings – Rep. Garlick/Sen. Lewis

H.2998: An Act to modernize participation in public meetings – Rep. Cabral *(different bill draft than above)*



Upcoming grant workshop series with state and federal agencies

Workshop Topics will include:

- **Community One Stop for Growth**
- **DEP water/wastewater funding opportunities**
- **USDA**
- **FEMA firefighter assistance grants**
- **MassDOT/US DOT**



7. Ensure equitable statewide support for Regional Transportation Authorities.

Bill Number(s):

H.3272/S.2277 - An Act to increase regional transit accessibility in the Commonwealth – *Rep. Blais/Sen. Moran*



8. Support rural and low- and- declining enrollment schools and districts.

Bill Number(s):

H.3567/SD.2519 - An Act to provide a sustainable future for rural schools - *Rep. Blais/Sen. Comerford*



9. Identify job retention & creation strategies to fuel rural economic development.

Bill Number(s):

H.404: An Act to support rural job creation and business expansion - *Rep. Blais*



10. Fully fund & reform State-Owned Land (SOL) Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) formula.

Bill Number(s):

**H.2714/S.1769: An Act to Reform Payments in Lieu of Taxes for State-Owned Land -
*Rep. Blais/Sen. Comerford***



11. Enact transportation infrastructure reform.

Bill Number(s):

S.2270: An Act to review the municipal Chapter 90 transportation funding program - *Sen. Mark*

H.3273: An Act to Invest in Local Roads – *Rep. Blais*

H.3409: An Act promoting equitable distribution of Chapter 90 funds – *Rep. Pignatelli*

H.3270: An Act Relative to Unpaved Roads – *Rep. Blais*



12. Invest in water & sewer infrastructure to revitalize small-town downtowns and address PFAS testing and mitigation.

Bill Number(s):

H.2197/S.1356: An Act to protect Massachusetts public health from PFAS – *Rep. Hogan/Sen. Cyr*



**13. Seize the promise
of western MA
passenger rail.**

Thank You!