

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-149 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION
Title: PROGRAM.

Vote Date: 3/4/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/20/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

[REP. GERALDO C. REYES, 75TH DIST.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

To update the statutes of the Farmers Market Nutrition Program to reflect procedures and terms currently used in the administration of such program.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Changed the term "redemption location" to "benefit location" throughout the bill.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Bryan Hurlburt, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Agriculture

The Commissioner supports this bill because of the previous success of the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), which serves Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) and seniors over the age of 60. This has helped people get access to fresh fruits and veggies while also supporting CT farms. The transition to electronic Farmers' Market Nutrition Program) has greatly increased DoAg's access to program data. They can now view redemption program, funding type, and other data in real time. In 2022, fund usage for WIC FMNP was 63% for state funding, and 44% for federal funds. In 2025, state fund usage was 66% and federal was 100%. This proposal makes technical revisions to the statutory language of the program to reflect updates that are now in place. They have provided a section-by-section revision below.

Section 1 revises the statutory definitions to the Farmers Market Nutrition Program to reflect current program uses. For example, the program no longer uses paper vouchers and instead offers electronic benefits. The change from authorized farmers market to authorized

redemption location is a result of the new system which enables farmers to accept benefits, and participants to redeem benefits, at all program authorized locations.

Section 2 updates language related to the administration of the Seniors/Farmers Market Nutrition Program (S/FMNP), reflective of current practice.

Section 3 updates language related to the eligibility requirements of the S/FMNP, reflective of current practices.

Section 4 updates language related to the responsibilities of participants in the S/FMNP, reflective of current practices.

Section 5 updates language related to the authorization of markets, reflective of current practices. It also repeals subsections (c) and (d) of 22-6k, which are no longer necessary due to the transition to electronic benefits and expanded accessibility.

Section 6 updates language related to vendor certification of S/FMNP vendors, reflective of current practices.

Section 7 updates language related to the responsibilities of farmers in the S/FMNP, reflective of current practices.

Section 8 updates language related to penalties for violations of the S/FMNP, reflective of current practices.

Section 9 updates language related to citations of non-compliance for the S/FMNP, reflective of current practice.

Section 10 updates language related to the benefits as distributed in the S/FMNP, reflective of current practice.

Section 11 updates language related to the benefits to the CT Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Section 12 repeals the requirement for regulations on the Farm Transition Grant, pursuant to C.G.S. 22-26k as the department issues annual program guidance.

Sections 13 and 14 makes conforming changes following the repeals in this bill.

Section 15 makes the following repeals:

- Regulatory language for the Connecticut Quality Seal Program. This program has been inactive for at least 20 years.
- Language related to the Apple Marketing Order, for marketing research and promotion of apples.

Based on additional communications with industry partners, they would like to take up substitute language that replaces the term "authorized redemption location" to the term "authorized benefit location" to minimize confusion with other programs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Meg Hourigan, Co-Founder, CT Food Sovereignty Collective

Hourigan, supports this bill because it's an enhancement to an already successful program. The farmers and consumers would benefit from the added flexibility proposed in this bill. The more farmers markets, the more places' people can redeem vouchers. Designating money in the program would also benefit beekeepers as well. The latest enhancement to the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, transitioning electronic FMNP, resulted in \$1,000,000 of food to families and seniors, generating the same revenue for Connecticut farmers. Hourigan argues, this bill simultaneously supports food access and farm viability, and in a food system where one out of every seven Connecticut residents is food insecure and farmers struggle to turn a profit, this is not an opportunity we can afford to pass up.

Ella Kennen, Coordinator, New Connecticut Farmer Alliance

The New Connecticut Farmer Alliance supports this bill because it provides necessary updates to the Farmers Market Nutrition Program. The biggest change, allowing vouchers to be redeemed at farm stands and mobile markets as well as farmers markets. Most farms rely on a mix of farmers markets, farm stands, and mobile markets to make money. Expanding this program to the other venues would reflect how direct-to-consumer agriculture operates and would help stabilize farm income. From the view of the consumer, this change would improve access, because many families cannot reliably shop at a single location at a fixed time every week.

Kaitlyn Kimball, Director, CitySeed

CitySeed is a food resource organization that runs the city's farmers markets, facilitates farm to school deliveries, as well as food business incubation work. CitySeed supports this bill as it would improve access to seniors and WIC recipients.

Kimberly Stoner, PhD, Director of Advocacy- Connecticut Northeast Organic Farming Association (CT NOFA)

Stoner, supports this bill because it allows consumers to redeem vouchers at farm stands and mobile markets as well. Many farms rely on a mix of these to remain viable and expanding the program to include all of them will only benefit them. It will also benefit the consumer because they can attend different venues.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Sarah Dzialo, Citizen

Dzialo is opposed to this bill because it involves government-managed food systems, rather than letting the markets allocate food incentives. From a free market perspective, consumer choice and competitive markets deliver better outcomes than state programs. Even administrative tweaks can entrench government roles that crowd out private solutions.

Reported by: Henry Russell

Date: 03/09/2026