

As Introduced

136th General Assembly

Regular Session

2025-2026

S. B. No. 233

Senator Hicks-Hudson

To create the Ohio Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force. 1
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BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. (A) There is hereby created the Ohio Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force to make recommendations to the General Assembly for expanding and supporting a state, local, and organic food system. 3
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(B) The task force shall consist of the following members appointed by the Governor: 7
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(1) One representative each from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Health; 9
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(2) Four organic farmers, representing the dairy, meat, vegetable, and grains sectors; 11
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(3) Four organic specialty crop producers, representing different flower, fruit, viticulture, aquaculture, fiber, vegetable, and ornamental sectors; 13
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(4) Two organic food processors; 16

(5) One organic distributor and one non-organic distributor; 17
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(6) Three representatives of not-for-profit educational organizations;	19 20
(7) One organic certifier;	21
(8) One consumer representative;	22
(9) Two representatives of farm organizations;	23
(10) One university agricultural specialist;	24
(11) One philanthropic organization representative;	25
(12) One food retailer representative;	26
(13) Two municipal corporation representatives from different communities in this state;	27 28
(14) Four representatives from community-based organizations focusing on food access, to include at least three members who represent under-represented ethnicities or minority groups;	29 30 31 32
(15) One chef specializing in the preparation of locally grown organic foods.	33 34
(C) The Governor shall make appointments to the task force not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section. Each member of the task force shall serve until the report is submitted in accordance with division (D) of this section. Each member is subject to removal at the pleasure of the Governor. Any vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.	35 36 37 38 39 40 41
(D) The task force shall develop a plan containing policy and funding recommendations for expanding and supporting a state, local, and organic food system. The task force shall identify and describe all of the following in the plan:	42 43 44 45

(1) Obstacles to increasing locally grown food and local organic food production;	46 47
(2) Land preservation and acquisition opportunities for local and organic agriculture in rural, suburban, and urban areas;	48 49 50
(2) Farmer training and development opportunities;	51
(3) Financial incentives, technical support, and training necessary to help Ohio farmers to transition to local, organic, and specialty crop production by minimizing their financial losses during the transition period;	52 53 54 55
(4) Strategies and funding needs to make fresh and affordable Ohio-grown foods more accessible, both in rural and urban communities, with an emphasis on creating new food outlets in communities that need them;	56 57 58 59
(5) Financial and technical support necessary to build connections between landowners, farmers, buyers, and consumers;	60 61
(6) Financial and technical support necessary to build a local food infrastructure of processing, storage, and distribution;	62 63 64
(7) Financial and technical support necessary to develop new food and agriculture-related businesses for local food and organic food production and distribution, such as on-farm processing, micro-markets, incubator kitchens, and marketing and communications businesses;	65 66 67 68 69
(8) Financial and technical support necessary to expand the development of farmers markets, roadside markets, and local grocery stores in unserved and underserved areas, as well as the creation of year-round public markets in large communities;	70 71 72 73

(9) Best practices and opportunities for the development	74
of local food and organic food production;	75
(10) Opportunities to educate the public and producers	76
about the benefits of local foods systems and about the	77
development opportunities described in this section;	78
(11) Legal impediments to local food and organic food	79
production and recommendations for a remedy to those	80
impediments.	81
The task force shall prepare and submit its plan in a	82
report to the General Assembly not later than two years after	83
the effective date of this section.	84
(E) The task force created under this section ceases to	85
exist once the task force submits its plan in a report to the	86
General Assembly under division (D) of this section.	87