

# News Release



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **New Farm Bill to benefit Detroit's Eastern Market and Urban Farming Startups**

*Councilman Gabe Leland attended farm bill signing in East Lansing*

**DETROIT (February 17, 2014)** – The new United States Farm Bill signed by President Barack Obama at Michigan State University in East Lansing on Friday, February 7 benefits the farmers who vend at Detroit's Eastern Market and provides access to resources for new urban farmers.

Detroit Councilman Gabe Leland was one of two Detroit elected officials who attended the Farm Bill signing event. The councilman is a board member of the Eastern Market Corporation.

"The recently passed Farm Bill is our opportunity to further grow Eastern Market and economic diversification in our city," said Leland who represents Council District 7 on the city's west side. "Senator Debbie Stabenow understands that agriculture is a significant industry in our state that supports the livelihoods of many families and provides families access to quality foods. She spearheaded the Farm Bill through Congress. Eastern Market, new urban farms launched in Detroit as we economically diversify our city and other agricultural interests in Detroit will benefit from this new bill."

Urban farmers from Detroit, farmers from western Wayne County, and farmers from across the region and state provide quality, healthy foods at reasonable prices at Eastern Market throughout the year and grow product for many retailers. Michigan contributed more than \$9.3 billion in the nation's value of agricultural production in 2012. It's the second largest industry in the state, behind only the auto industry.

Leland continued, "The new Farm Bill will assist urban farmers and new family farmers in startup investments. The bill places emphasis on beginning farmers and specialty crop producers. Also, one of the bill's greatest benefit is that it provides resources for farmers who suffer crop loss and subsequent revenue loss due to catastrophic weather or uncontrollable market conditions. This is significant in helping to ensure farmers who provide a quality food source to Detroit and Michigan families do not go out of business."

The proposed Future City framework that was announced more than one year ago provides for the diversification of land use which includes more green spaces and maximizing open land by urban farmers.

Leland added, "I look forward to serving on the board of Eastern Market Corporation where together we will take advantage of the opportunities the Farm Bill provides, including the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program that provides access to training and grant dollars."

### **About Detroit Councilman Gabe Leland**

Gabe Leland serves citizens in the new District 7 on Detroit's west side as councilman. He was elected in November 2013 as one of seven council members who represent citizens in the city's new district format. Leland is a former elected member of the Michigan House of Representatives - District 10, serving constituents in northwest Detroit. While a state representative, he was chair of the House Committee on Urban Policy. As a council member, Leland chairs the Planning and Economic Development Committee and serves on the boards of the Eastern Market Corporation and Tech Town.

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