



## **CFSC Calls for Healthy, Fair, Community-Based Farm Bill Negotiated Through a Transparent Process**

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**WASHINGTON, DC**—As the leaders of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees reportedly put the final touches on their recommendations to the Congressional Super Committee for a super-fast-tracked Farm Bill, the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) is calling for strategic investments in local farms, healthy food, and jobs.

Through a series of listening sessions earlier this year, CFSC members across the country identified the coalition's priorities for the Farm Bill, set to expire on September 30, 2012. Many of these priorities are reflected in three new bills:

- The Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act (S. 1773, H.R. 3286) introduced today by [Senator Sherrod Brown](#) (OH) and [Representative Chellie Pingree](#) (ME). Among other provisions, this bill would double funding for the Community Food Projects competitive grants program, expand access to local and regional food in school meals, level the playing field for farmers markets and other local food enterprises to serve federal nutrition program participants, and build local and regional food infrastructure.
- The Community Agriculture Development and Jobs Act ([H.R. 3225](#)) sponsored by Representative Marcy Kaptur (OH). This bill would create an Office of Community Agriculture, specifically tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that existing USDA programs address the root causes of food deserts and food insecurity.
- The Expanding Access to Farmers Markets Act ([S. 1593](#)) introduced by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (NY), designed to help SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) participants use their benefits to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables by providing wireless EBT technology to farmers markets and other local food enterprises.

In an October 14 letter to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, the Chairs and Ranking Members of both agriculture committees promised a "complete legislative package" to achieve \$23 billion in deficit reduction by November 1. Although there has been much speculation about the proposed cuts, no details are yet public, and today's reports indicate that the recommendations will be delayed until the end of the week. "Many people inside and outside the Beltway are concerned about the lack of transparency, accountability, and public engagement in this process," said CFSC Policy Director Kathy Mulvey. "Public interest in food and farm policy is at an all-time high—this is no time to be negotiating the Farm Bill on a fast track behind closed doors," Mulvey concluded.

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Last week, Representative Earl Blumenauer (OR) released a report, "[Growing Opportunities: Family Farm Values for Reforming the Farm Bill](#)," which outlines proposals to help small and midsize farmers and improve federal nutrition programs. The report highlights Community Food Projects, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and facilitating the use of SNAP benefits at farmers markets as important steps to provide healthier eating choices for low-income people. Representative Blumenauer is an original co-sponsor of the Local Farms, Food, and Jobs Act.

CFSC hosts its [15<sup>th</sup> annual conference](#) in Oakland, California, from November 5-8. Hundreds of activists from across the U.S. will hear from Representative Pingree and other inspiring speakers, and have the opportunity to take action on the Farm Bill. The conference will also help to launch a new campaign by CFSC and [Parent Earth](#) to jumpstart conversations about food policy and the Farm Bill, featuring [three short videos](#) and an organizing toolkit.

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*The Community Food Security Coalition catalyzes food systems that are healthy, sustainable, just, and democratic by building community voice and capacity for change. The coalition's diverse membership includes more than 500 social and economic justice, anti-hunger, environmental, community development, sustainable agriculture, community gardening, and other organizations.*