



Farmers Market Support Amendment Act of 2025

Advocacy Guide

Public Hearing Details

The public hearing on **B26-0109 - Farmers Market Support Amendment Act of 2025** will be held in the Committee on Health, chaired by Councilmember Christina Henderson:

- When: **Monday, March 17, 2025, 9:30 am**
- Where: hybrid in hearing room 500 of the John A. Wilson Building (1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW) and virtual via Zoom.
- How to watch: dccouncil.gov/council-videos, christinahendersondc.com/live, and youtube.com/@cmchenderson

What does this bill do?

The bill proposes to establish a comprehensive **Farmers Market Support Program** within the District of Columbia's Department of Health. This Program would support farmers markets, farm stands, and mobile markets by:

- Providing **technical assistance** related to permits, licensing, and nutrition benefit programs;
- Streamlining **permitting processes**;
- **Coordinating** all government agencies involved in permitting and supporting farmers markets;
- Conducting **marketing and promotion** activities to raise resident awareness of farmers markets;
- Administering a **grant program** specifically targeting farmers markets in low food access areas to help cover operational costs, infrastructure, and extended seasonal operations; and
- Requiring **discounted permitting fees** to markets in low food access areas.

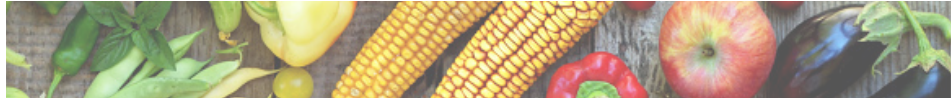
How can I provide input on this bill?

Anyone can provide testimony on this bill, even if not a DC resident. You can provide input by [registering to testify at the public hearing](#), submitting written testimony or voicemail testimony, or by contacting the Committee and Council offices. There are more details on how to share your inputs on the following page.

Background

DC's 53 independently operated farmers markets are an important public resource that reach across the city's eight wards. They provide residents with access to fresh, locally produced food, and serve as a unique market channel for the region's small- and mid-size farms and food businesses which fosters a robust, resilient regional food system. Farmers markets also transform city streets into lively community spaces that draw weekly participation from residents. As vibrant public events, they drive foot traffic and have been credited with increasing sales for surrounding brick-and-mortar businesses as well as enhancing public safety. However, to date, the District has not allocated staff or resources toward market development, operation, or promotion. While farmers market incentive programs like Produce Plus create a revenue stream for farmers market vendors and increase fresh produce access, they do not cover costs related to operation, marketing, or technical assistance to markets and vendors.

In 2023 and 2024, the Food Policy Council convened groups of farmers market operators, vendors, and consumers, especially those in Wards 7 and 8, to understand the biggest barriers and opportunities to expand the impact of Farmers Markets in the District. The Sustainable Supply Chain Working Group compiled these insights and presented to a Food Policy Council meeting [regarding their recommendations](#) to support the maintenance, success, and expansion of farmers markets into food apartheid areas. The [presentations](#) and [recording](#) can be found at dcfoodpolicy.org/farmers-markets.



Your voice matters! Here are 3 ways to share your thoughts:



Testify live virtually or in-person

You must register online by **5pm on Thursday, March 13, 2025.**

1. Visit the hearing website at lims.dccouncil.gov/Hearings/hearings/731.
2. Click the “Register to Testify” box, then complete the form.
3. If you need language and ASL interpretation, submit the form indicating the request by Monday, March 10, 2025.
4. Submit your written testimony before the hearing.



Submit a written or voicemail testimony

1. Visit the hearing website at lims.dccouncil.gov/Hearings/hearings/731.
2. Click the “Submit Testimony” box and complete the form.
3. Upload your statement or type your testimony directly onto the form. Then submit.
4. To leave a voicemail testimony, contact the committee for instructions.
5. The deadline to submit a testimony is 5:00pm on Monday March 31, 2025.









Contact Committee or your Councilmember





Throughout the legislative process, residents can call, email, or meet with Council offices.

1. Contact the Committee of Health’s Director, Ona Balkus at obalkus@dccouncil.gov.
2. You can also reach Committee Chair Councilmember Henderson’s office, or your Ward or At-Large Councilmember.

Tips for writing testimony

-  Thank Committee Chair Henderson for convening the hearing and greet any other Councilmembers present.
-  Briefly introduce yourself and/or your organization/business.
-  Explain why you care about farmers markets and how this bill will make a difference to you, your organization, or your community.
-  Express any concerns or suggestions you have to improve this bill.
-  Share personal stories about your experience. Provide specific examples where possible.
-  Close by thanking the Councilmember(s) for listening and clearly re-stating your recommendations.

Tips for testifying live

-  You typically have 3 minutes to speak (5 minutes for organizations). Practice reading aloud. A 3-minute testimony is between 450 and 600 words, or one page single spaced.
-  You can also submit written testimony, which can be as long as you like and include more information than you read aloud.
-  After you testify, you may be asked questions. It is ok if you don’t know the answer to a question. You can always say, “I’ll get back to you.”
-  You will not be assigned a specific time to testify and you will be expected to be present when your name is called. You may estimate when this will be based on the witness list that is shared the day before the hearing. When it is your turn to testify, you will be called on. If you’re testifying virtually, you will need to have access to Zoom. The virtual hearing will be publicly visible.