“Irrigating” Food Deserts
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Problem
- Massachusetts contains 70 food deserts.
- Massachusetts lacks legislation to eliminate food deserts.
- Worcester, the second largest city in Massachusetts has two food deserts.

Solution
Support the passing of state-wide policy that incentivizes and subsidizes affordable full-service grocery stores to move into the food deserts.

Assessment
- 12 states have passed similar legislation.
- The graphic to the right shows the states who are involved in this type of legislation.
- A grocery access report (2012) recommends to state legislators, the same incentives other states have used.
- The proposed bill benefits citizens and companies by eliminating food deserts and creating business.

Proof of Concept
- Pennsylvania enacted a healthy food retail policy in 2004.
- Program offers special low rate financing, grants for renovation, loans for start-up costs, construction, and equipment.
- The policy built 88 stores, created 5,023 jobs, and 1.6 million square feet of commercial space.
- Pennsylvania currently has a 11.9% food insecurity rate which is 2.4% lower than the national average of 14.3%.

Promotion Plan
- Report that shows the pros of this legislation, and plan to distribute it to all representatives and senators.
- Plan on having politicians use this policy for their campaigns and to help move the bill through the legislative process.

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Definitions
- An urban area more than one mile away from a full-service grocery store is described as a primary food desert.
- People near or under the poverty line living in a food desert are more likely to be food insecure and suffering from malnutrition.

Evidence
- In 2012, the Center for Disease Control reported the link between living in a food desert to food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Obesity (3), diabetes (3), heart disease (4), and mental health disorders (5) as well as poverty (6) are more prevalent in food deserts.

References