

For Immediate Release

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## **Farmers, Grocers, Small Businesses Praise Lawmakers for Sending Governor Reform to Keep Michigan Food Affordable**

*Michigan Senate Advances Bipartisan House Bill 4999 to Keep  
Michigan Grocery Items Tax Free*

**LANSING**—Michigan farmers, grocers, small businesses, social service providers and labor leaders today praised members of the state Senate for sending legislation to Governor Rick Snyder to guarantee Michigan families' food and grocery items will remain free of new local taxes. The Senate voted last week on nearly identical legislation, and approved House Bill 4999 by a 30 to 5 vote. Today's vote sends final language for transmission to Governor Snyder for his signature.

"Taxing food hurts families, farmers, and local businesses," said Dan Papineau, Director of Tax Policy at the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. "The Michigan Food Access and Affordability Act ensures Michigan families can count on affordable, tax free food and beverages. We urge Governor Snyder to sign the bill into law as soon as possible."

Bill Black, Legislative Director of the Michigan Teamsters Joint Council 43 added: "These local food taxes have a devastating impact on working men and women. My colleagues in states where taxes like these have been experimented with report layoffs and job losses, and we don't want that here in Michigan."

Neighborhood anchors like small grocers, diners, restaurants, and theaters provide great jobs to thousands of Michiganders, but would be jeopardized by new taxes on food items. Recently enacted beverage taxes in Cook County,

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Illinois (surrounding Chicago) and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania have driven up prices on local families, killed hundreds of jobs, and slashed paychecks for others.

“Michigan is a national leader in agriculture and farm-to-table dining,” said Rebecca Park with the Michigan Farm Bureau. “The last thing Michigan farmers need are new local taxes on their products at stores, markets, and restaurants. We’re glad lawmakers took this step today to protect Michigan agriculture.”

House Bill 4999 is sponsored by state Representative Rob VerHeulen and was adopted last week by the House on a vote of 101-7.

Keep MI Food Affordable is a coalition of Michigan farmers, small businesses, and labor leaders committed to preventing new taxes on food and beverages across Michigan. Coalition partners include the Michigan Farm Bureau, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Food Bank Council, Michigan Grocers Association, Michigan Retailers Association, Small Business Association of Michigan, Michigan Restaurant Association, National Federation of Independent Business – Michigan, Michigan Dairy Foods Association, Michigan Food Processors Association, Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers Michigan Chapter, Potato Growers of Michigan, Inc., American Sugar Beets Association, Michigan Soft Drink Association, Michigan Distributors and Vendors, the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, the Michigan Teamsters, Bowling Centers Association of Michigan, National Association of Theater Owners of Michigan, and more.

More can be found online at: <http://keepmifoodaffordable.com/>

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