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PRESS RELEASE

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Chandler, Gobi and Ferguson Announce Grant Funding for Local Farms

BOSTON – **Senate Majority Leader Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester), Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer) and Representative Kimberly N. Ferguson (R-Holden)** have announced that \$10,000 in grant funding has been awarded to Green Gardens Nursery in Rutland and \$25,000 in funding to Lilac Hedge Farm in Holden. The funding has been awarded through the Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP) administered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).

Green Gardens is a family owned and operated state certified nursery specializing in ornamental trees and shrubs. The \$10,000 award will be used for an irrigation project.

Lilac Hedge Farm raises beef cows, heritage breed sheep, pigs and poultry using sustainable raising practices, with no added growth hormones or steroids. Their animals are grass fed and raised on a pasture and the farm runs a CSA program. Their \$25,000 award will be used to install new fencing on the farm.

“This is a great opportunity for small businesses in Massachusetts to pursue environmental preservation, efficiency, and success in partnership with the state,” said MA Senate Majority Leader Harriette L. Chandler. “Congratulations to Lilac Hedge Farm, LLC in Holden and Green Gardens, LLC in Rutland for receiving funding through the Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program.”

“Having seen the effects of this year’s drought all over my district and in many other parts of the state, water conservation is more important than ever,” said Senator Gobi. “Congratulations to Green Gardens in Rutland on being awarded \$10,000 for an irrigation project.”

“I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration and MDAR for designating funds to prioritize agriculture and environmental sustainability in the Commonwealth,” said Rep. Ferguson. “This is yet another example of the true partnership between the Administration and municipalities and I am thrilled that two small businesses in the First Worcester District were chosen as recipients.”

AEEP is one of several programs within MDAR’s Division of Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance (DACTA), whose mission is to advance the conservation and utilization of agricultural resources through preservation, environmental stewardship, technology, technical assistance and education in order to enhance the viability of agricultural enterprises and safeguard natural resources. AEEP has funded over 500 projects statewide since 1999, providing growers and producers over \$6 million dollars to help address environmental concerns on their farms.

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