



Support for SB 985 Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program & Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund (Sen. Hester)
Position: Support with Sponsor Amendments

Attn: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

February 22, 2020

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee,

We are writing in support of Senate Bill 985 with sponsor amendments, sponsored by Senator Hester, which establishes the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program and Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Fund.

Community FARE was established to help safeguard a diverse and healthy local food economy that will preserve farmland integrity and biodiversity and ensure that food grown here is accessible to residents of Frederick County and its regional neighbors. In 2018 Community FARE, along with community partners from Fox Haven Organic Farm, and experienced food system professionals from Center for a Livable Future met to launch the Frederick County Food Council and advance Frederick County's local food access, economy, and sustainability. Frederick MD Farm to School is a detailed project working toward those objectives in the specific context of Frederick County's public school institution.

We are grateful for your involvement in creating the Maryland Food for Maryland Institutions Study Group with the goal of increasing market opportunities for the local farming community and access to healthy, fresh, locally grown food. The establishment of the programs outlined in SB 985 would allow state institutions to contact local farms that meet certain environmental standards. This is a pathway to building farm-to-institution relationships, which will help solidify economic opportunity for local farmers. The bill also supports the creation of value-added processing facilities and mobile refrigerated trailers, which would assist small-scale farms in getting their produce to Maryland institutions.

Procurement of local foods benefits public health by providing clients, staff, and other consumers using Maryland institutions fresh nutrient-rich food. Reducing the distance that food is transported also conserves energy, and generates more economic activity within the State of Maryland. Providing the infrastructure

tools needed to serve larger markets, improve access to nutritious food, and preserve farmland further strengthens both the local economy and the health of our environment.

For the reasons detailed above, we support SB 985 for the 2020 session, and recommend that the Committee adopt a favorable report of SB 985 with sponsor amendments.

Respectfully,

Janice Wiles
Director, [Community FARE](#)
Food Advocacy Resources Education
[Farm to School](#) / [Frederick County Food Council](#)
(240) 626 5209
janice@communityfare.org

Melanie Smith-Bell
Communications & Outreach
Coordinator, Community FARE
(301) 768-3354
melanie@communityfare.org