



March 9, 2023

**2023 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY  
SBo650: State Disaster Recovery Fund**

**BILL:** SBo650: Public Safety - State Disaster Recovery Fund  
**POSITION:** Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0650  
**BILL ANALYSIS:** Establishing the State Disaster Recovery Fund to provide disaster related assistance to units of local government for individuals and families and for the repair of replacement of public facilities, and for low-interest or no-interest loans to businesses and nonprofits when a federal disaster declaration is not received; requiring the fund to provide disaster-related assistance for the unmet needs of individuals and families after a federal disaster declaration or in the event of a certain denial of federal assistance.

Dear Chair Guzzone and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill to appropriate State funds for the State Disaster Recovery Fund. This fund will support individuals and families impacted by a local disaster when no Federal Disaster Declaration is declared, and will help make Maryland more resilient to future disasters.

When disasters take place, residents who rely on food assistance, social support programs, and other essential services are most impacted. When these support systems are interrupted, food insecurity becomes more prevalent. This legislation will assist individuals by providing access to funding to replace lost or spoiled food, and will provide low- or no-interest loans to small businesses to aid in recovery. This proactive approach is commendable, as no one should suffer from hunger due to a disaster that was beyond their control. Equally, it is critical to support small food businesses in under-resourced neighborhoods to enable them to maintain their foothold in the community and provide access to food.

With impacts from climate change likely to bring more disasters, it is important for the State of Maryland to establish this fund so that residents and businesses will have the support they need to recover. that will ensure residents have the support they need to respond to disasters. The creation of the State Disaster Recovery Fund is a key way to support small businesses who will be more impacted by disasters, as well as ensure that funding is available to repair, or restore, any damage done to public facilities. This bill will also enable the Maryland Department of Emergency



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Management to establish a minimum reporting criteria to gather disaster-related impact data. This is especially important, as the timely acquisition of such data will not only bolster ongoing relief and recovery efforts, but will also support the efforts of the Montgomery County Food Council in comprehending the impact of disasters on the food system at the local level.

This legislation is critical for advancing Maryland's disaster recovery efforts, ensuring that its citizens receive timely assistance during difficult times, and promoting food security in the state. **For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports SBoo650 and urges a FAVORABLE REPORT for this bill.**

*The Montgomery County Food Council is a nonprofit organization that serves as the primary connection point for businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and residents around food system issues in our County. We bring together over 2,000 local and regional partners in community-wide education, advocacy, and capacity building initiatives. Our work cultivates a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system by enhancing food access for the over 100,000 at risk for hunger, expanding food education opportunities for all residents, supporting our County's farms and food and beverage businesses, and addressing the impact of local food production, distribution, consumption and recycling on our natural resources*

**For more information, please contact Massa Cressall, Interim Executive Director, at the email and phone number below.**



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