

# **HB0056\_DNR\_SUP\_B&T\_3-26-25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Wilson

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 26, 2025

**BILL NUMBER: House Bill 56 – Third Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing**

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT**

### **EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION**

The Department supports any efforts to provide effective control mechanisms for invasive species. By allowing easier procurement of invasive species provided by a Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider, the bill would allow for an additional mechanism for harvesters to sell their invasive species catch.

Below are the commercial harvest amounts for the past four years (2024 data is not yet complete). The data reflects the increasing importance of commercial harvest as a control mechanism for aquatic invasive species in Maryland.

Commercial fishery landings as reported to Maryland Department of Natural Resources as of 1/17/2025 on Monthly Finfish Harvest Reports. Data from 2024 should be considered preliminary.							
YEAR	CATFISH - UNKNOWN	CATFISH - BLUE	CATFISH - BULLHEAD	CATFISH - CHANNEL	CATFISH - FLATHEAD	CATFISH - WHITE	SAKEHEAD
2020	0	554,665	770	1,400,757	22,355	1,950	3,445
2021	0	639,391	1,066	863,075	11,799	700	5,483
2022	220	866,997	756	1,175,003	15,040	0	5,949
2023	70	1,130,300	175	1,352,799	27,366	2,890	6,592
2024**	0	1,254,926	219	866,985	9,465	1,886	9,294

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

None.

Contact: Emily Wilson, Acting Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ (443) 223-1176 (cell)

**BILL EXPLANATION**

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The bill as amended streamlines the process for the Department of Education to purchase certain food including certified Chesapeake invasive species provided by a Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider.

# **HB 56- SUP-3-26-25- B&T.docx - Google Docs.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FAV

***HB 56 – Procurement – State Department of Education – Local Food Purchasing Program***

**Position:** Support

**Committee:** Budget and Taxation

**Date:** March 26, 2025

**From:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) supports HB 56. DGS supports the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) establishing and administering a program to connect local public school systems with local farms and fisheries to provide local food products to students. DGS is currently working with both MSDE and the Maryland Department of Agriculture on efforts to establish such a program.

In support of this legislation, DGS worked collaboratively with the bill sponsors, along with our sister agencies, to develop the amendments incorporated into the Third Reader of HB 56 as it passed in the House of Delegates.

For the reasons detailed above, DGS requests a favorable report on HB 56.

# **Senate Testimony.HB56\_Delegate Lorig Charkoudian.d**

Uploaded by: Lorig Charkoudian

Position: FAV



## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### HB 56 - PROCUREMENT - STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - LOCAL FOOD PURCHASING PROGRAM

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN

MARCH 26, 2025

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

Farm to School programs help students, small farmers, and the community. Students get to eat fresh, healthy local foods. Small farmers gain access to bigger and more stable financial opportunities by selling to schools. The community benefits by having healthier children, more job opportunities, and a stronger local economy.<sup>1</sup>

Complicated procurement processes make it difficult for many small farmers to get their products purchased by schools. Currently they must engage separately with multiple, individual school systems.

**This bill will:**

- Require the Maryland State Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of General Services and the Department of Agriculture, to establish a program, when funding is available, to procure certain local food for local school systems from certain providers under certain circumstances. This program would include a centralized platform to encourage the participation of farmers and distributors in procurement opportunities.
- Require the Department to report to the General Assembly on or before December 1 each year on the total number and dollar value of procurement contracts for local food at local schools, including the number of these contracts that are with certified local farms or certified Chesapeake invasive species providers.
- Alter certain percentage price preferences adopted by the Board of Public Works by regulation; requiring the Board to adopt certain regulations relating to limiting responses for certain procurements.
- The program will procure products that are:
  - Foods grown at a certified local farm, as defined in § 14-701 of the State Finance and Procurement article.

- Certified Chesapeake invasive species provided by a certified Chesapeake invasive species provider, with the goal of increasing Blue Catfish in school meals, and decreasing the presence of this invasive (but nutritious) species from the Chesapeake Bay.
- Foods grown within a 250 miles radius from an elementary or secondary school.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 56.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.farmtoschool.org/>



# **HB0056- State Board- Support- Crossover.pdf**

Uploaded by: Madeline Houck

Position: FAV

TO: Senate Committee on Budget and Taxation

BILL: House Bill 0056- Procurement - State Department of Education - Local Food Purchasing Program

DATE: March 26, 2025

POSITION: Support

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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the State Board of Education support HB0056 - **Procurement - State Department of Education - Local Food Purchasing Program**, which requires the State Department of Education to engage, in coordination with the Department of General Services (DGS) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), in the establishment of a program to procure certain local food for local school systems from certain providers under certain circumstances. This includes the procurement of food grown at a certified local farm, provided by a certified Chesapeake invasive species provider, or grown within a 250-mile radius from a Maryland elementary or secondary school.

The MSDE Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (OSCNP) administers the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) child nutrition programs (e.g., school breakfast and lunch, etc.) including, [USDA's Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program](#). **HB0056** empowers the facilitation of intergovernmental agreements with local education agencies (LEAs) participating in the Farm to School Program (F2S), for the procurement of local foods. The interagency collaboration enhances MSDE's efforts to streamline and increase the procurement of local foods for inclusion in school meals and grows the local agricultural supply chain by creating new market opportunities for producers.

Although LEAs have participated in F2S programs since its inception in 2010, the 2023 Farm to School Census conducted by the USDA ([2023 Farm to School National and State Data Workbook](#)) documents that local food procurement is only a small percentage of food expenditures made by participants in the various child nutrition programs. To illustrate, the procurement of local produce, meat, and poultry only accounts for 3.8% of total food purchases by LEAs in Maryland (a decline from the last Census in 2019, when it was 8%). While 11% of their food expenditures go for local milk. Though the respondents include a mix of Maryland public and private schools, residential care institutions and child and adult care institutions participating across the nutrition programs, the county school districts are by far the largest purchasers.

The Census and a 2023 [Farm to School sustainability study](#) conducted by OSCNP provide some insight as to the reasons local food procurement is not yet optimized in Maryland. Among the challenges is the perception that the availability of local food is limited, and that there is even less availability of minimally processed (e.g., raw, cut, frozen) local foods. Also noted was the difficulty of sourcing local producers, suppliers, and distributors, among other things.

Currently, OSCNP is developing an automated system, funded by the USDA, to source, order, and fulfill local food deliveries to schools. Known as the Local Food Exchange (LFE), the system was envisioned to address some of the barriers identified by LEAs and local producers for procuring local food in the quantities needed for school meals. LFE is expected to ease some of these barriers by hosting an extensive database of producers. Those included in the database will be procured under the intergovernmental agreement legislated by **HB0056**. This will facilitate simultaneous procurement of local food for several LEAs in a single "state" bid, easing the burden for producers of responding to multiple, individual LEA solicitations. It also provides producers with access to larger contracts, and clients they might not have otherwise had the opportunity to engage. Local aggregation will also be easier to facilitate when multiple producers are

included in a single agreement. As will the alignment of more effective menu and crop planning.

MSDE is dedicated to the increased procurement of local foods in school meals. MSDE OSCNP will continue to promote and devise strategies towards this goal, including support for more local distribution chains that can provide raw produce and processed local foods (e.g., salsa made with Maryland tomatoes, fish patties made with Maryland blue catfish). The proposed legislation also supports these goals and enables a permanent pathway for MSDE to ensure and manage the cornerstone of federal F2S programming. Moreover, **HB0056** complements the State mandate for 20% local procurement among state agencies, aligns with USDA requirements to “buy American”, and the USDA’s expanded provisions for local geographic preference in contracting.

MSDE respectfully requests that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB0056**. Please contact Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D. [akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov](mailto:akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov) for any additional information.

# **HB 56 - CBF - FAV - B&T.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## House Bill 56

### **Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing**

**Date:** March 26, 2025

**To:** Budget & Taxation Committee

**Position:** **FAVORABLE**

**From:** Matt Stegman,  
Maryland Staff Attorney

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 56 which will permit the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in coordination with the Department of Agriculture and Department of General Services to, pending the availability of funding, create a program to procure locally-produced food for local school systems. This program, when implemented, will benefit school-age children who will have increased access to fresh, local food, and support Maryland's agricultural and fishery industries.

Many small farming operations are at the forefront of implementing regenerative agricultural practices that improve soil health and increase food and water quality. Regenerative agriculture is also key to addressing many issues we face regarding climate change, from reducing greenhouse gases to mitigating flooding caused by more intense storms. Climate-friendly practices, like those practiced at CBF's Clagett Farm, help us produce food in ways that increase resilience and work with natural systems. Providing smaller operations access to more stable financial opportunities is not just a win for those businesses, schools, and students, but potentially for our soil and waterways as well.

Finally, the bill specifically allows for the procurement of Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species. This will aid in the State's efforts to combat invasive – and delicious – species like the blue catfish by providing an increased market demand for the fish. Reducing blue catfish populations will support the health of key aquatic species they prey on, most notably menhaden and blue crabs.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 56.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

## **HB 56\_Senate\_Horizon Foundation\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nikki Highsmith Vernick

Position: FAV



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March 26, 2025

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**BILL:** HB 56 – Procurement – State Department of Education – Local Food Purchasing Program

**POSITION:** Support

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives.

**The Foundation is pleased to support HB 56 – Procurement – State Department of Education – Local Food Purchasing Program.** This bill would enable the Department of Education to procure locally grown food for schools and encourage farmers to engage with local school systems to sell their products.

The Foundation is a lead member of the Healthier Choices Coalition, a group of Howard County civic, faith and health organizations and individuals working to create policy change that will make healthier food and drinks more widely available, accessible and affordable for everyone in Howard County. Members have been working with the Howard County Public School System for the last year to improve school meals. One of these ongoing initiatives is to implement a farm-to-table program that would incorporate more locally grown produce into school menus. This bill would help facilitate that effort and make it easier for the school system to engage with local farmers and provide fresh, healthy produce for students during the school day.

Like many communities across the state, food insecurity has increased in recent years in Howard County, particularly for lower- and middle-income families. For many students, school meals are their primary source of daily calories and nutrition. Ensuring that school meals are healthy and include fresh, locally grown produce will better enable these students to thrive inside and outside of the classroom.

Healthy food should be accessible to everyone in our community. For this reason, the Horizon Foundation **SUPPORTS HB 56** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for your consideration.

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**The Horizon Foundation of Howard County, Inc.**

10221 Wincopin Circle, Suite 200, Columbia, MD 21044 P 410.715.0311 F 410.715.2973 • [info@thehorizonfoundation.org](mailto:info@thehorizonfoundation.org)

# **HB 56 Testimony MARBIDCO FAV B&T.pdf**

Uploaded by: Steve McHenry

Position: FAV





**MARBIDCO**  
growing rural ventures™

MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE-BASED  
INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
1410 Forest Drive, Suite 21 ~ Annapolis, MD 21403  
Office: 410-267-6807 ~ Fax: 410-267-6809  
www.marbidco.org

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Mary Shank Creek, *Chair* / Stephen R. McHenry, *Executive Director*

## TESTIMONY STATEMENT

**BILL:** House Bill 56 (Procurement - State Department of Education - Local Food Purchasing Program)

**COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation

**DATE:** March 26, 2025

**POSITION:** Favorable

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The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) supports HB 56, which requires MSDE, in coordination with the MDA and the DGS to establish a program (when funding is available) to procure locally grown food for local school systems. This includes local food grown within a 250-mile radius from the school, food grown by a Certified Local Farm Enterprise or Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species, which would include blue catfish.

The program must include a centralized platform to facilitate procurement of food by local school systems, and MSDE must report annually on the procurement of local food. Moreover, the Board of Public Works must (1) raise the percentage price preference from 5% to 10% for providers of food from certified local farms bidding on school food contracts and (2) adopt regulations authorizing State schools and facilities to conduct individual procurement that is limited to responses from certified local farms.

Farm to School programs serve to benefit students (with access to healthy sources of fresh and locally produced nutrition), small farmers (through enhanced market development and produce sales), and the community (with both locally derived economic activity and more potential access to healthy foods). Complicated procurement processes make it difficult for many small farmers to get their products purchased by schools. Currently they must engage separately with multiple, individual school systems.

### Additional Background Information

In 2020, the General Assembly established the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program (under MDA) and the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund (under MARBIDCO). The legislation established a 20% procurement goal for Maryland State agencies and institutions to purchase locally grown food from certified local farm enterprises. Many

institutional and wholesale buyers that want to purchase locally sourced food find it difficult in contracting with small farmers to meet their supply sourcing needs. In 2023 the legislation was amended to include Chesapeake Invasive Species Providers to provide Chesapeake Invasive Species as part of the 20% procurement goal. Chesapeake Invasive Species were added to help mitigate the devastating effects of invasive species like the blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay and help create markets for that fish product.

For this reason, the 2020 bill and subsequent legislation also established a five-year program of funding (totaling about \$2 million) for MARBIDCO to be able to offer Certified Local Farm and Fish Food Aggregation grants to help support the development of a local food aggregation infrastructure in Maryland to help meet current and future wholesale and institutional market demand for locally produced food products. This program has provided funding to farm food aggregators to help with the construction of processing and storage facilities and the purchase of capital equipment.

Farmer marketing associations and cooperatives as well as local governments have been able to access these funds. This grant program is expected to wind up later this year.

The establishment or expansion of farm food aggregators helps provide a link between the small farmer and the larger-scale buyer that is looking to purchase locally grown food. It has long been hoped that local school systems would eventually become purchasers of locally produced foods too. Caroline County Public Schools has truly led the way in Maryland (before the MARBIDCO grant program was even created), and more recently Frederick County Schools began purchasing local farm foods from an aggregator that MARBIDCO has funded. We are hopeful that additional county school systems will be able to access more local farm food because of the passage of this legislation.

In closing, MARBIDCO believes that this legislation will clearly serve to benefit students (with better access to healthy local food products) as well as small farmers (with a sustainable new market), **As such, MARBIDCO respectfully requests a Favorable Report for House Bill 56.**

*MARBIDCO Contact: Steve McHenry, 410.267.6807*

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*MARBIDCO was established 18 years ago by the Maryland General Assembly to help enhance the sustainability and profitability of the State's agricultural and resource-based industries in order to help bolster rural economies, support locally grown and processed food and fiber products, and preserve working farm and forest land. MARBIDCO is a nimble, quasi-governmental financial intermediary organization that has a mission to serve exclusively the commercial farming, forestry, and seafood industries of Maryland. Young and beginning farmers are a special focus for MARBIDCO, as is farm operation diversification. In delivering its financing programs, MARBIDCO works cooperatively with commercial banks and farm credit associations, as well as a host of federal, State, regional, and local government agencies, and universities. Since 2007, MARBIDCO has approved some 1,440 financings totaling more than \$113 million for food and fiber business projects located in all Maryland's counties – and in the process has leveraged nearly \$237 million in commercial lender financing. For more information about MARBIDCO's programs, please visit: [www.marbidco.org](http://www.marbidco.org)*

# **MDFB - Support - HB56 Procurement - State Departme**

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035  
410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

March 26, 2024

**To:** Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE:** **Support of HB0056 - Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority**  
**- Local Food Purchasing**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 Farm Bureau families in Maryland, I am writing in support of HB0056, which seeks to strengthen Farm to School programs across Maryland by improving procurement processes and fostering connections between local farmers, school systems, and the community.

Farm to School programs have proven to be transformative for students, small farmers, and local communities. These programs enable students to gain access to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced foods, which supports their academic success and long-term health. Small farmers benefit from new, stable financial opportunities by selling directly to schools, which helps sustain their businesses and livelihoods. Meanwhile, communities experience positive impacts, including healthier children, increased job opportunities, and a stronger, more resilient local economy.

However, the current procurement processes create significant barriers for small farmers and food producers. Many are unable to participate fully due to the complexity of engaging individually with multiple school systems. This bill addresses these challenges by allowing the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to establish “master contracts” with local farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors, and other local food businesses. These contracts streamline procurement processes, enabling school systems to purchase easily from these agreements while creating more opportunities for small and local producers. Additionally, the bill includes Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species in the procurement scope, with a specific focus on Blue Catfish. This initiative will not only introduce a nutritious food source into school

meals but also contribute to reducing the presence of this invasive species in the Chesapeake Bay, thereby supporting environmental sustainability.

By supporting this legislation, Maryland will enhance the effectiveness of Farm to School programs, provide critical support to small businesses, and promote healthier and more sustainable communities.

**Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB0056**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Hough", is positioned below a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough  
Director of Government Relations

*Please contact Tyler Hough at [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org) with any questions*

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Tyler Hough  
Director of Government Relations

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