



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 104

Maryland Farms and Families Fund - Purpose and Use - Alterations

Date: February 5, 2025	Position: Favorable
To: Environment & Transportation Committee	From: Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 104 which will make changes to the existing Maryland Farms and Families Fund (The Fund). The Fund provides matches to farmers for purchases made using FMNP, SNAP, and WIC benefits at qualified farmer's markets. The bill makes alterations to the program to provide logistical and marketing support aimed at increasing the use of federal nutrition benefits on farm-fresh produce and to support nonprofits and other qualified persons to aid the Department of Agriculture in administering the program.

Connecting communities with farm-fresh produce grown using regenerative, Bay-friendly practices is a key part of CBF's mission. For more than 30 years, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Clagett Farm has provided free, fresh produce to people with incomes below the poverty line. The project, a collaboration with Capital Area Food Bank and PGC Food Rescue, blends local, sustainable organic agriculture with social justice. As part of our outreach efforts to other small farming operations, we've helped connect direct market agricultural operations with experts that can help them navigate the challenges in getting equipped to accept federal nutrition programs. We support MDA's efforts to make the Maryland Farms and Families Fund easier to implement, more widely accessible to local farmer's markets, and their outreach efforts to individual farmers.

Increasing use of federal nutrition benefits for nutritious, fresh farm products is a win-win for agricultural operations in the state and Marylanders who are food insecure. **CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 104.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at 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.