

MAP Support for SB 226 - MD Farms and Families Fun

Uploaded by: Abby Snyder, Co-Chair

Position: FAV



Member Agencies:

211 Maryland

Baltimore Jewish Council

Behavioral Health System Baltimore

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Energy Advocates

Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Family League of Baltimore

Fuel Fund of Maryland

Jewish Community Relations Council
of Greater Washington

Job Opportunities Task Force

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
Inc.

League of Women Voters of Maryland

Loyola University Maryland

Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Community Action
Partnership

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Paul's Place

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore

Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Abby Snyder, Co-Chair

P: (240) 593-6121

E: ASnyder@baltjc.org

Anne Wallerstedt, Co-Chair

P: (410) 991-7285

E: AWallerstedt@mdfoodbank.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT/OPPOSITION OF SB 226

MARYLAND FARMS AND FAMILIES FUND – PURPOSE AND USE – ALTERATIONS

Senate Finance Committee

January 30, 2025

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) supports SB 226, which aims to improve the efficiency of the Maryland Market Money program by streamlining the administration of program funds by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and eliminating unnecessary administrative burdens during the implementation process.

The Maryland Market Money (MMM) program is a statewide initiative run by Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), which provides a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits – such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and WIC – at participating Maryland farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs.

This program not only helps to strengthen local economies by ensuring federal dollars directly support local Maryland farmers and agricultural producers, but it also helps to improve access to healthy food options for Marylanders struggling with food insecurity by doubling their purchasing power.

Currently, the implementation process for MMM requires funds to be administered through a grant application, which imposes significant administrative burdens on both SMADC and MDA. This process limits the program's efficiency and diverts valuable time and resources away from its purpose—supporting access to healthy food for low-income Maryland families.

SB 226 will simplify this process by eliminating the need for a grant application and simply allowing MDA to directly administer funds to a nonprofit partner of their choosing. Streamlining this process for Maryland Market Money will help ensure that MDA and SMADC can continue their partnership with less administrative hurdles and ensuring that more resources are focused on helping families access fresh, affordable food while supporting local farmers.

MAP appreciates your consideration and requests the committee provide a favorable report on SB 226.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.

1-28-2025 SB0226 Written Testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: Heather Hulse

Position: FAV



info@marylandmarketmoney.org
www.marylandmarketmoney.org

Testimony in Support of SB0226
Maryland Farms and Families Fund - Purpose and Use - Alterations
Senate Finance Committee
January 28, 2025

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Heather Hulse. I am the Program Manager for Food Access Programs of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) and of the Maryland Market Money (MMM) program, a statewide food access program of SMADC and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) that feeds Marylanders and supports farmers. MMM removes economic barriers for Marylanders experiencing food insecurity, providing a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits at participating Maryland farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs while providing technical assistance, training, marketing, and additional services to stakeholders. Maryland Market Money and SMADC strongly support Senate Bill 0226: Maryland Farms and Families Fund - Purpose and Use - Alterations.

Allowing MDA to administer the Farms and Families Fund as part of their budget instead of administering the fund as a competitive grant is a crucial timesaver for the stakeholders who have been involved with this effort. For years, the Maryland Market Money program has been the only party who has applied and/or qualified for the grant. The Farms and Families Fund legislation was originally written for MMM support. At conferences and in meetings, I have heard Maryland Senators and Delegates even refer to past adjustments to legislation as “the Fund for Maryland Market Money.” No other Maryland program or organization meets all the qualifications to receive an award from the Fund. Over the years, as written, the competitive grant format has cost MDA and MMM considerable staff time and effort going through the grant process from RFP preparation to proposal writing, MDA adjourning a selection committee, grant reporting and reporting review, etc. as a result. In order to increase efficiency for all parties involved, it would be wise to make this shift out of a grant format. Those Fund dollars

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
P.O. Box 745 Hughesville, MD 20637
Phone - 240-528-8850 ~ Email – info@smadc.com





info@marylandmarketmoney.org
www.marylandmarketmoney.org

will be able to be used more efficiently and better serve the populations experiencing food insecurity that the Maryland Market Money program serves statewide.

In conclusion, we urge for your vote in favor of SB0226. Thank you for your time.

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
P.O. Box 745 Hughesville, MD 20637
Phone - 240-528-8850 ~ Email – info@smadc.com



MD Hunger Solutions - Support for SB 226 - MD Farm

Uploaded by: Julia Gross

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 226

Maryland Farms and Families Fund - Purpose and Use - Alterations

Senate Finance Committee

January 30, 2025

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, Maryland Hunger Solutions strongly supports SB 226 – Maryland Farms and Families Fund, which aims to streamline the administration of funds for the Maryland Market Money (MMM) program by eliminating the need for a grant application process and allowing the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) or a qualified nonprofit to directly implement the program, enhancing efficiency and accessibility.

As a statewide, non-partisan, nonprofit dedicated to ending hunger in Maryland, Maryland Hunger Solutions strives to overcome existing barriers to state and federal nutrition assistance programs and create self-sustaining connections between Maryland residents and nutritious foods.

The Maryland Market Money (MMM) program has proven to be a critical support for both Marylanders facing food insecurity and local farmers by providing a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits – such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), WIC and Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program at participating Maryland farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs.

Recent state data reveals that in 2024, over 692,000 Marylanders participated in SNAP, while in 2023, there were over 188,000 WIC participants. By doubling the purchasing power of these benefit recipients, this program not only helps to alleviate economic barriers for many Maryland residents, but it also keeps federal benefit dollars in the local economy and supports local agricultural producers. According to the [Maryland Market Money 2023 Annual Report](#), on average, every \$1 spent is accompanied by \$1.70 in federal benefits spending, resulting in \$2.70 for local farmers.

Since 2020, The Maryland Market Money program has been jointly run by Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). Under this partnership, the program has grown to operate in over 60 access points, serving 722 agricultural producers as of 2023. Despite the success of this partnership, current regulations require a grant application process in order for SMADC to



access the funds to implement the program, which causes considerable staff time and administrative burden to both SMADC and MDA. SB 226 aims to streamline that process by eliminating the need for a grant and allowing these funds to be directly administered by MDA and a nonprofit partner of their choosing.

Streamlining this process for Maryland Market Money will help ensure that MDA and SMADC can continue their partnership with less administrative hurdles, allowing them to direct more of their time and resources to the purpose of the program – supporting access to healthy foods for all Marylanders at Maryland Farmers Markets.

In conclusion, we urge a favorable report for SB 226. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Support AHA SB226 Maryland Farms and Families.pdf

Uploaded by: Laura Hale

Position: FAV



January 27, 2025

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association
Favorable SB 226- Maryland Farms and Families Fund

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Honorable Members of the Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today. The American Heart Association extends its support for the updates to SB 226 Maryland Farms and Families Fund. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

Access to nutritious healthy food is essential for long term heart health. Unfortunately, too many Marylanders do not have access to healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, living in food deserts. In these food deserts many Marylanders rely on convenience stores which primarily sell high salt food with low nutritional value. It is difficult, if not an impossible for these Marylanders to regularly get to a supermarket and have healthy foods. As such, Marylanders living in these areas suffer from higher rates of obesity and cardiovascular disease.

For those who are food insecure, this issue of access is often compounded by the fact that these individuals only have limited funds for food and transportation and do not have access or money for healthier options. Farmers Markets are able to serve areas that do not have healthy food options. Farmers Markets have the flexibility to go into these food deserts and create options. Pairing this programming with funding for those on WIC and other government programs assist those with food insecurities to extend their dollars and provide more healthy options for their families.

This legislation is an important step towards creating access and availability to healthy foods for those who are food insecure and living in food deserts. Implementation of the legislation is paramount and we believe this updates will aid in moving this needed program forward.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on SB 226 to support the health of all Marylanders.

SB 226 - CBF - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

Senate Bill 226

Maryland Farms and Families Fund - Purpose and Use - Alterations

Date: January 30, 2025
To: Finance Committee

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

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 226 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 SB 226.**

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.

SB 226 MDA LOS.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Jones

Position: FAV



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Kevin Atticks, Acting Secretary
Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building
50 Harry S Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
mda.maryland.gov

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading
Industry

410.841.5885 Baltimore/Washington
410.841.5846 Fax

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Legislative Comment

Date: January 30, 2025

BILL NUMBER: SENATE BILL 226

SHORT TITLE: MARYLAND FARMS AND FAMILIES PROGRAM - ALTERING USE OF FUND

MDA POSITION: SUPPORT

Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) manages the Maryland Farms and Families Fund. The Program's purpose is to double the purchasing power of food-insecure residents of Maryland with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables and to increase revenue for farmers through the redemption of federal nutrition benefits at Maryland farmers' markets and farm stands.

Budgeted at \$300,000 annually, this program matches purchases made with MDA's Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) funds, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) funds.

This program has issued grants to non-profits as required by the current legislation. The sole recipient had been the Maryland Farmers Market Association until the organization dissolved in 2020. Since then, a combination of the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission and MARBIDCO (Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation) have received the grant to run the Maryland Market Money program statewide and subcontracted SMADC to manage and distribute the fund.

This legislation will streamline the funding allocation process by allowing MDA to manage the program directly with an existing Inter Agency Agreement with the Tri County Council of Southern Maryland (TCCSMD). The only applicants MDA has ever had for the fund have been the Maryland Farmers Market Association and then MARBIDCO on the behalf of SMADC and FFARMD on the behalf of SMADC. MDA is required to grant the fund to a nonprofit, SMADC is a subsidiary of the TCCSMD, neither of which are nonprofits, rather government entities. It is time consuming to do the RFP, get legal review, get contracts done and then money out the door. Because the contract has repeatedly been issued to the same entity, MDA is requesting to streamline the process by granting the fund directly to SMADC via the TCCSMD.

MDA thanks the Committee for your consideration and requests a favorable report on SB 226. If you have additional questions, please contact Rachel Jones, MDA Director of Government Relations at Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov or (667) 408-0134.

SB0226_FAV_DHS.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge Government Affairs

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

January 30, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: TESTIMONY ON SB0226 - MARYLAND FARMS AND FAMILIES FUND-PURPOSE AND USE-ALTERATIONS - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and the opportunity to provide favorable testimony for Senate Bill 226 (SB 226).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS empowers Marylanders to reach their full potential by providing preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities. Our Family Investment Administration implements the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) serving over 382,000 households. We distributed more than \$125M in SNAP benefits on average each month in State Fiscal Year 2025. This past summer, SUN Bucks, our summer nutrition program helped feed more than 594,000 children in every single one of our jurisdictions across the state. Maryland issued \$71.5 million in federally-funded grocery buying benefits from June to August, making SUN Bucks the largest investment to combat childhood hunger during the summer months in Maryland's history.

Both SNAP and SUN Bucks are issued on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card used to purchase food at approved retailers. Farmers' markets in Maryland are among our approved retailers, enabling SNAP and SUN Bucks customers to shop locally. Farmers' markets offer a unique opportunity for SNAP customers to access fresh, locally grown produce and other nutritious foods. For many SNAP and SUN Bucks

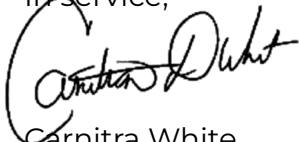
25 S. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-3500
Tel: 1-800-332-6347 | TTY: 1-800-735-2258 | www.dhs.maryland.gov

customers, farmers' markets improve accessibility in terms of location, cost, and product quality. Farmers' markets provide an alternative to conventional grocery stores especially in underserved communities or food deserts.

Over 60 participating farmers markets within the State currently accept [Maryland Market Money](#) (MMM). MMM allows purchases using federal nutrition benefits at participating Maryland farmers markets. With the proposed matching funds, farmers' markets are incentivized to expand their participation in SNAP and SUN Bucks, enabling Marylanders to purchase healthier food options using their benefits. We support SB 226 as it addresses healthier food access within our communities, expanding and improving access for SNAP and SUN Bucks customers.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide favorable testimony to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carnitra White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Carnitra White
Principal Deputy Secretary

MDFB - Support - SB 226 Maryland Farms and Familie

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

January 28, 2025

To: Senate Finance Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Support of SB226 Maryland Farms and Families Fund – Purpose and Use – Alterations.

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in support of SB226 Maryland Farms and Families Fund – Purpose and Use – Alterations. This bill will make alterations to the Maryland Farms and Families Fund to match purchases made with FMNP, SNAP, and WIC benefits at participating farmers markets and farm stands and provide logistical and marketing support to Non-Profit Farmers Markets to increase use of these programs.

Farmers markets provide immense value not only to the agricultural producers who participate in them but also to the communities they serve. They create vital opportunities for residents to access fresh, locally sourced produce, meats, dairy products, and other goods while fostering direct connections between consumers and producers. These markets serve as hubs for economic activity, creating jobs and supporting local economies. Additionally, farmers markets strengthen community bonds, offering spaces for social interaction, education, and the celebration of local culture. For farmers, these markets provide critical direct-to-consumer sales opportunities, ensuring they receive a fair price for their goods while gaining valuable feedback from customers. The opportunity for farmers markets around the state to increase their use of federal nutrition programs will only further the accessibility of quality, local food for all.

Maryland Farm Bureau supports SB226 the Maryland Farms and Families Fund– Purpose and Use – Alterations and respectfully asks for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', written over a horizontal line.

Director of Government Relations

Please Contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions