

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 39
(Senator Cassilly)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Returning to State Meat Processing
Inspection (Farms Buy Local Act)**

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Returning to State Meat Processing Inspection. The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) must provide staff for the task force. Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget. The task force must (1) study the feasibility of returning to State meat processing inspection; (2) make recommendations on implementing State meat processing inspection; and (3) advise the Secretary of Agriculture in adopting rules and regulations relating to meat processing inspection and the establishment of production standards. By December 1, 2023, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture. **The bill terminates December 31, 2023.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MDA are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service enforces the Federal Meat Inspection Act, which requires federal inspection and regulation of meat products prepared for distribution in interstate commerce for use as human food.

The Maryland Wholesome Meat Act generally authorizes MDA to inspect establishments engaged in the slaughtering of livestock or the processing of livestock carcasses, parts of carcasses, or meat or meat food products capable of use as human food solely for intrastate commerce.

Additional Comments: MDA advises that it has not inspected meat processing establishments under the Maryland Wholesome Meat Act since the early 1990s, when the department's inspection program ended for budgetary reasons and establishments were advised to seek federal authorization to continue operating.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Department of Legislative Services

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