

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 9 (Delegate Charkoudian)
Environment and Transportation

Public Safety - Food System Resiliency Council - Definitions and Reports

This bill alters existing responsibilities of the Food System Resiliency Council and repeals outdated one-time reporting requirements. Under the bill, the council must develop equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system that (1) address and eliminate limited food options and food scarcity that exist in “healthy food priority areas” (rather than food deserts, as specified under current law) and (2) reduce “wasted food,” as defined under the bill (rather than the current statutory reference to food waste). The bill also requires the council to (1) periodically update a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food and (2) include in its annual report appropriate policy and legislative changes.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Healthy food priority areas” means predominantly lower-income areas that have limited access to retail outlets that sell affordable, healthy foods. “Wasted food” means food not used for its intended purpose that is managed in a variety of ways, including

(1) donations to feed people; (2) the creation of animal feed; (3) composting; (4) anaerobic digestion; or (5) disposal in landfills or combustion facilities.

Current Law: Established by Chapters 724 and 725 of 2021, the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council must meet regularly for a period of at least two years to address food insecurity in the State. Staffed by MDEM, the council must pursue specified goals, including developing (by November 1, 2021) equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system, including (1) addressing and eliminating racial inequities in the food system; (2) addressing and eliminating diet-related public health disparities; (3) addressing and eliminating food deserts; and (4) reducing food waste, increasing recycling, and encouraging other relevant environmental impacts.

By November 1, 2021, the council was required to develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food, including (1) increasing the quality and quantity of production, as well as aggregation, marketing, and distribution of local food in urban, suburban, and rural settings; (2) increasing procurement of local food through schools, universities, and other institutions; (3) creating additional market opportunities for Maryland food businesses; and (4) expanding access to small scale manufacturing and food production infrastructure. By November 1, 2021, the council was required to submit an interim report to the General Assembly on its key findings and activities. By November 1, 2022, the council was required to submit a report to the General Assembly on its recommendations for a long-term structure for a statewide food policy council, including providing recommendations on (1) appropriate policy and legislative changes; (2) potential ways to restructure the council, as specified; and (3) any other recommendations of the council.

By November 1, 2023, and each year thereafter, the council must submit an annual report to the General Assembly on its key findings and activities. Among other things, the council's [fourth annual report](#) includes a discussion on wasted food.

State Expenditures: MDEM advises that it has a dedicated food system resilience planner who can coordinate the effort for the council under the bill. However, the one-time development of the 2021 strategic plan, which is subject to periodic updates under the bill, required the use of outside contractors with relevant expertise. MDEM advises that as long as the department can determine the frequency of the periodic updates to the plan, it can implement the bill with existing resources.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Emergency Management; Department of Legislative Services

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