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Senate Education Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Testimony in **support** of **S.B. 478** – Climate-friendly Foods

Dear Honorable Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Friends of the Earth and our more than 26,000 Maryland members, I urge you to support S.B. 478 to reduce Maryland's GHG emissions from the food we purchase by 25% by 2030. Thank you to Senator Lam for introducing this important legislation and to the cosponsors on the committee.

Maryland has taken ambitious action on climate, but the state has not yet begun to address emissions associated with our food consumption. Maryland-specific data is not available, but globally, food and agriculture account for around a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, according to the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization. The most direct point of leverage that Maryland has to mitigate emissions from our food system is through its own procurement. Maryland purchases a significant amount of food, namely for correctional facilities (25 million meals), 11 healthcare facilities, and 29 public universities. These food purchases should align with our state's values, including mitigating climate change.

At the same time, Maryland has a legacy of environmentally preferable purchasing. We prioritize purchasing green cleaning products, environmentally friendly food service ware, composting on state lands, and recycled paper. Including food in our green purchasing policies is a natural and necessary extension of what we are already doing. Department of General Services is tracking other categories of environmentally preferable products across agencies already. Adding food will enable the state to establish a baseline for this important category of emissions without creating an undue burden on state resources.

University of Maryland College Park has already established a baseline for its food-related GHG emissions and committed to a 25% reduction by 2030. This is a modest and achievable goal for the state.

Friends of the Earth conducted a pilot analysis in Oakland Unified School District as they reduced a handful of carbon-intensive foods over a period of two years and realized a 14% reduction in their carbon footprint and a 6% reduction in their water footprint. To achieve these same carbon reductions by installing solar panels, they would have spent $2.1 million. Instead, they actually saved $42,000 and increased student satisfaction.

Friends of the Earth hired a Life Cycle Analysis consultant to analyze two weeks' worth of menus provided by DPSCS and the results are attached to our testimony. Reducing emissions by 25% in *our correctional facilities alone* would save over 12,000 metric tons of CO2-eq per year, or the equivalent of taking 2,600 cars off the road. We also found that Corrections is currently spending 28% less on vegetarian meals than meat-based meals and that people receiving meat-based meals are receiving twice the maximum recommended amount of meat, poultry, and eggs per week. So the state should realize both cost savings and health benefits, in addition to carbon savings.

In conclusion, this is a moderate bill that capitalizes on Maryland's existing framework for green purchasing to include food, a major category of global emissions that the state is contributing to through our food purchasing. We urge a favorable report of S.B. 478. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

About Friends of the Earth U.S.: Founded by David Brower in 1969, Friends of the Earth U.S. is the United States' voice of the world's largest federation of grassroots environmental groups, with a presence in 74 countries. Friends of the Earth works to defend the environment and champion a more healthy and just world. Our current campaigns focus on promoting clean energy and solutions to climate change, ensuring the food we eat and products we use are safe and sustainable and protecting marine ecosystems and the people who live and work near them.

Maryland's GHG Footprint from Food Purchasing

Maryland does not track its greenhouse gas emissions from the food we purchase, but globally food and agriculture account for at least one quarter of greenhouse gas emissions.[1] SB 478/HB 772 sets a target of reducing these emissions by 25% by 2030, which can be accomplished by reducing food waste and shifting to climate-friendly menus.

Correctional facilities (25 million meals)

11 Public healthcare facilities

29 Public universities

Carbon Footprint of Food Served in Maryland Prisons

~49,058 annual metric tons CO2-eq[2]

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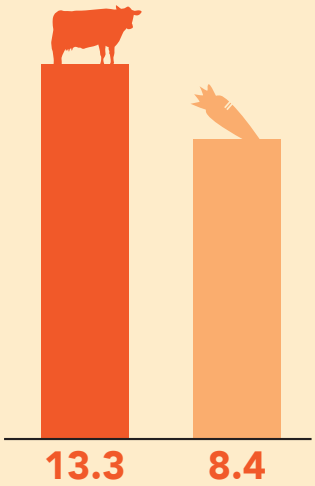
5,520,167 miles driven

10,416 passenger vehicles on the road

811,180 trees planted and grown over 10 years[3]

70% of the food emissions came from animal products

Meat diet vs Vegetarian diet



(Regular Meal) lbs CO2-eq/day

(Veg Menu) lbs CO2-eq/day

GHG Emissions

avg cost of a meat dinner

avg cost of a vegetarian dinner

Cost[5]

By shifting to more climate-friendly foods, the state can save money that can be reinvested into higher quality food, including more fresh and local produce and a smaller amount of local meat.

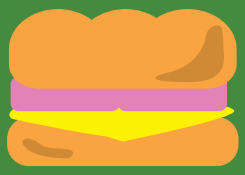
People on the meat diet received an average of ~53oz of meat, poultry and eggs per week, which is more than 2x as high as the maximum recommendation of 26 oz per week from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans.* Overconsumption of meat, especially red and processed meat, has been linked to heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and even some forms of cancer.[6]

For corrections to achieve a 25% reduction in their GHG emissions, they could swap:

Cow's Milk

3 days per week

Soy Milk



once per week

Bologna & Cheese Sandwich

Hummus & Veggie Sandwich

once per week

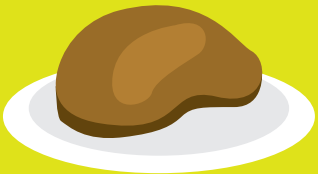
Pepper Steak

Lentils

Turkey BBQ

once per week

Veggie Chili



Meatloaf & Gravy

once per week

Bean, Cheese & Veggie Burrito

Friends of the Earth

1. IPCC. (2019). Special Report: Climate Change and Land. Accessed at https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/. 2. This carbon footprinting analysis was conducted by a Life Cycle Analysis consultant hired by Friends of the Earth, and the full analysis can be shared upon request. It is based on two weeks of menus provided by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. Is assumes no back-of-the-house food waste and uses North American data from: J. Poore and T. Nemecek. (2018). Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers. Published in *Science*. Vol. 360, Issue 6392, pp. 987-992. DOI: 10.1126/science.aaq0216. 3. Environmental Protection Agency. (2019) Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator. Accessed at https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator 4. This figure also comes from using the Poore and Nemecek (2018) data. There is a beef industry-funded Life Cycle Analysis study that uses a moderately lower figure for beef emissions. If that data is used for beef, animal products account for 66% of GHG emissions from the DPSCS menus. 5. Cost information is based on the prices of three dinners selected by DPSCS and shared with Friends of the Earth by email. 6. Micha, R., Wallace, S. K., & Mozaffarian, D. (2010). Red and Processed Meat Consumption and Risk of Incident Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke, and Diabetes Mellitus: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. Circulation, 121(21), 2271–2283. Zhong VW, Van Horn L, Greenland P, et al. Associations of Processed Meat, Unprocessed Red Meat, Poultry, or Fish Intake With Incident Cardiovascular Disease and All-Cause Mortality. JAMA Intern Med. Published online February 03, 2020. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2019.6969