



February 19, 2020

2020 SESSION
Montgomery County Food Council

BILL: SB0478: Maryland Green Purchasing Committee - Food Procurement - Greenhouse Gas Emissions
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
POSITION: Testimony of Support of Senate Bill 0478
BILL ANALYSIS: Requiring the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee to develop on or before January 1, 2022, a certain methodology, in consultation with the Department of the Environment and the Department of General Services, for a unit to estimate greenhouse gas emissions that occur through the life cycle of certain food; requiring each unit to report to the Committee on the unit's progress in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with food procured by the unit on or before August 1, 2024 and each August 1 thereafter; etc.

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council supports a comprehensive, sustainable food purchasing policy that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland. Such a bill would offer significant environmental benefits and establish the State as a pioneer in addressing and reducing the impacts of climate change.

As this conversation continues, however, we encourage the State to incorporate guidance provisions for the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee that will ensure clarity of the proposed methodology, as well as the monitoring and evaluation process associated with the proposed methodology. We also encourage the State to simultaneously evaluate how our purchasing can continue to support local farmers and our local food economy, ensure nutritionally dense menu offerings, and provide culturally-appropriate options that are fairly priced to accommodate low-income residents, as well as other considerations. For these reasons, we support SB0478, and urge the Committee to consider the elements noted above in their discussion on and review of this bill.

Members of the Montgomery County Food Council are available and interested in participating in the process to assist the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee in developing the methodology to compare the environmental impact of various foods, and would offer expertise and input where appropriate.

The Montgomery County Food Council is an independent council formed and led by individual community members and representatives of local businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Our mission is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system. Our vision is to cultivate a vibrant food system in Montgomery County that consciously produces, distributes, and recycles food, making it accessible to all residents while promoting the health of the local food economy, its consumers, and the environment.

For more information, please contact: Heather Bruskin, MCFC Executive Director at the email and phone number below.

