



**Support for HB 1488 Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program & Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund (Delegate Charkoudian)
Position: Support with Sponsor Amendments**

March 10, 2020

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

We are writing in support of House Bill 1488 with sponsor amendments, sponsored by Delegate Charkoudian which establishes the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program and Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Fund.

Community FARE was established to help safeguard a diverse and healthy local food economy that will preserve farmland integrity and biodiversity and ensure that food grown here is accessible to residents of Frederick County and its regional neighbors. In 2018 Community FARE, along with community partners from Fox Haven Organic Farm, and experienced food system professionals from Center for a Livable Future met to launch the Frederick County Food Council and advance Frederick County's local food access, economy, and sustainability. Frederick MD Farm to School is a detailed project working toward those objectives in the specific context of Frederick County's public school institution.

We are grateful for your involvement in creating the Maryland Food for Maryland Institutions Study Group with the goal of increasing market opportunities for the local farming community and access to healthy, fresh, locally grown food. The establishment of the programs outlined in HB 1488 would allow state institutions to contact local farms that meet certain environmental standards. This is a pathway to building farm-to-institution relationships, which will help solidify economic opportunity for local farmers. The bill also supports the creation of value-added processing facilities and mobile refrigerated trailers, which would assist small-scale farms in getting their produce to Maryland institutions.

Procurement of local foods benefits public health by providing clients, staff, and other consumers using Maryland institutions fresh nutrient-rich food. Reducing the distance that food is transported also conserves energy, and generates more economic activity within the State of Maryland. Providing the infrastructure tools needed to serve larger markets, improve access to

nutritious food, and preserve farmland further strengthens both the local economy and the health of our environment.

For the reasons detailed above, we support HB 1488 for the 2020 session, and recommend that the Committee adopt a favorable report of HB 1488 with sponsor amendments.

Respectfully,

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