



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

HB0317

Maryland Green Purchasing Committee – Food and Beverage Procurement – Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Date: March 31, 2021

Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Senate Education, Health
and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: David Tana, Restoration,
Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) SUPPORTS HB 317. This bill would establish a process for tracking greenhouse gas emissions associated with the state's food and beverage purchases and reduce emissions by 25% on or before June 30, 2030.

Healthy farms and regenerative food production systems are a requisite for a healthy ecosystem. The modern food system, whereby produce is commonly shipped across the country or internationally before arriving in grocery stores, creates food waste and produces tons of harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Purchasing local food reduces these emissions and benefits the environment, human health, Maryland farmers, and the local economy.

The agriculture sector accounts for nearly one third of global greenhouse gas emissions

Supporting locally grown food from sustainable farms is integral to CBF's mission to Save the Bay. Greenhouse gas emissions are a cause of climate change. A recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report affirmed that we only have a decade left to avoid irreversible climate damage, and Maryland must do its part to protect its citizens and the environment.

Rising temperatures are inhospitable to vital underwater grasses and stress fish populations from striped bass in the main Bay to brook trout in Pennsylvania's coldwater streams. Sea level rise inundates many of the Bay's iconic islands—lands that until recently supported thriving communities. Climate change adds new challenges to an ecosystem already stressed by pollutants, population growth, and increasing development.

The State's own food procurement is a direct point of leverage to reduce emissions associated with food consumption

Reducing food waste and shifting food purchases towards climate-friendly diets were ranked the third and fourth, respectively, most effective climate solutions from Project Drawdown, a climate mitigation project led by Paul Hawken and contributed to by more than 200 scientists, policymakers, and other experts. Maryland schools spent \$18 million on local food served in schools according to the most recent USDA Farm to School Census.

CBF supports local food purchases through its Buy Fresh Buy Local Chesapeake program which helps consumers, sustainable farms, and businesses find each other and support efforts to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay. This bill would encourage more purchases from Maryland institutions of food grown or raised in Maryland using regenerative agricultural practices which provide additional carbon sequestration potential.

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HB0317 would make three positive changes: require state agencies report on food procurement emissions; require establishment of best practices; and establish a goal of food-based emissions reduction of 25% by June 30, 2030.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report. For more information, please contact Robin Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at RClark@cbf.org or 443.995.8753.

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