



John Hartline, Chairman

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway • Annapolis, MD 21401
Office: 410-841-5772 • Fax: 410-841-5987 • TTY: 800-735-2258
Email: rmc.mda@maryland.gov
Website: www.rural.maryland.gov
Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Testimony in Support of
Senate Bill 723– Maryland Food System Resiliency Council
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 4, 2021

The Rural Maryland Council **Supports** Senate Bill 723– Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. The bill will develop the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council that will address the food insecurity issues that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic, develop recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system, and develop by November 1, 2021, a plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food.

Food insecurity has been a problem across the nation, including the state of Maryland, before the pandemic, with the Maryland Food Bank claiming that up to 1.5 million Marylanders could be food insecure, meaning they do not know where their next meal is coming from. The economic effects of the pandemic have only increased the number of families currently struggling to find their next meal. Since March, 38% of those who received charitable food support from Feeding America Network were new to the program.

SB723 will address the hunger crisis that so many Marylanders are currently facing from no fault of their own. A few of the goals in this bill include addressing the food insecurity caused by COVID19, collecting data across the state to create a map and identify gaps in service, addressing and eliminating racial inequalities in the food system, and addressing and eliminating food deserts. One of the main ways that hunger and food insecurity will be addressed is through the increase of production and procurement of Maryland Certified Foods. By increasing the production and procurement of Maryland foods, it will help the Marylanders who are growing and producing these foods and those who are currently hungry and going without nutritious meals. This would include more local foods in suburban, urban, and rural parts of the state, introducing more local foods to schools, universities and other institutions, and creating more market opportunities for Maryland food businesses.

SB723 intends to address the growing food insecurity issue and to provide Marylanders with accesses to nutritional meals. The Rural Maryland Council respectfully asks for your favorable report of Senate Bill 723.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.

“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”