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Uploaded by: Bennardi, Maryland Department of Health /Office of Governmen

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS

March 4, 2021

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Chair

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Pamela Williams, M.H.A.

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD, 21401

RE: SB 723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland State Advisory Council on Health and Wellness (the Council) is submitting this letter of support for Senate Bill 723 (SB 723) titled, “Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.”

The goals of SB 723 are: “establishing the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council; providing for the composition, co–chairs, co–vice chairs, and staffing of the Council; providing that a member of the Council may not receive compensation but may be reimbursed for certain expenses; authorizing the Council to establish certain subcommittees; specifying the duties of the Council; requiring the Council to submit certain reports to the General Assembly on or before certain dates; making this Act an emergency measure; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.”

The Council supports SB 723 as an inclusive, visionary way to build a healthier food system. Growing evidence suggests population-level dietary changes could improve both health and environmental sustainability.¹ The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of healthy, sustainable food systems. This legislation will help develop a comprehensive council to respond to the complexity of Maryland’s food system. Lower food security has been associated with worse dietary quality and a higher probability of major chronic diseases including hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and kidney disease.^{2, 3} The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its economic effects underscore how food system challenges can impact Marylanders, particularly in minority, rural and lower-income communities. According to the American Public Health Association, problems with food systems and access to healthy food options are often entwined with a range of social issues.⁴ In particular, a substantial body of research has documented the impact structural racism has on the U.S. food system.⁵

¹ Nelson ME, Hamm MW, Hu FB, Abrams SA, Griffin TS (2016) Alignment of healthy dietary patterns and environmental sustainability: a systematic review. *Adv Nutr* 7:1005–1025 <https://doi.org/10.3945/an.116.012567>

² Gregory CA, Coleman-Jensen A (2017) Food Insecurity, Chronic Disease, and Health Among Working-Age Adults. U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235.pdf?v=653.9>

³ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2020/march/food-insecure-households-score-lower-on-diet-quality-compared-to-food-secure-households/>

⁴ <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2014/07/29/12/34/toward-a-healthy-sustainable-food-system>

⁵ Kelly, R, et al (2021). An annotated bibliography on structural racism present in the U.S. food system (8th ed.). Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems https://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/structural_racism_in_us_food_system

SB 723 ensures local food policy representatives from diverse Maryland communities can bring their expertise to the table to build a more sustainable food system.

A healthy sustainable food system demands attention to the many related factors needed to get nutrient-dense food from farm to consumer: food production, processing, distribution, preparation, and consumption. Producers, educators, nutrition professionals, scientists, researchers, businesses, and consumers each have a role to play in addressing these factors. The diverse membership of the Food Systems Resiliency Council, as established by this legislation, has the breadth of background and expertise needed to craft a comprehensive, systems approach.

The Council respectfully urges this Committee to approve SB 723 as a critical public health measure to help reduce food insecurity and provide all Marylanders with healthy foods from a sustainable food system. This is especially critical during the time of this COVID-19 pandemic and economic challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Kiel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of a long, thin horizontal line that extends from the left margin towards the signature.

Jessica Kiel, M.S., R.D., Chair, State Advisory Council on Health and Wellness

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0723.pdf

Uploaded by: Conner, Charles

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

CHARLES R. CONNER III, ESQ.
Director of Government Affairs

JOEL N. BELLER
Deputy Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **SB 723**

TITLE: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

SPONSOR: Senator Hestor

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

DATE: March 4, 2021

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 723 – Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. This legislation would establish the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council to address the severe food insecurity throughout the state.

This pandemic has forced local government to come to terms with the rise of food insecurity in the State of Maryland. As most schools remain closed, vulnerable students have not been able to access an important source of food, forcing struggling families to pick up the cost. In response, Baltimore County aided in the swift transition to meal-pick up programs on both school days and weekends to help improve accessibility. In addition, the demand for non-profit food delivery has skyrocketed despite severe resource shortages. In response, the County has also helped secure thousands of dollars of funding to food distributors. Despite local efforts, this need will extend far beyond the pandemic and all counties need a coordinated more long term solution.

This legislation would establish a council tasked to address the food crisis that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. The council will work toward this goal by accessing data on food insecurity, leveraging state and federal grants, exploring the need for Community Eligibility Provisions and reporting recommendations to the state on how to move forward. This will help support local governments in their fight to end local hunger.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 723. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Director of Government Affairs, at cconner@baltimorecountymd.gov.

Health Care for the Homeless - SB 723 FAV - Food R

Uploaded by: Diamond, Joanna

Position: FAV

**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
SB 723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council**

**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 4, 2021**



Health Care for the Homeless supports SB 723, which would establish a Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and widened the existing disparities in our state's food system and many of those already struggling pre-pandemic were hit the hardest. The creation of a state-wide food council to address Maryland's food insecurity crisis is essential for not only helping Marylanders recover from the effects of the pandemic but also towards building an equitable and just food environment.

At Health Care for the Homeless, we realize the ability of our clients to access affordable and nutritious food has a direct impact on their health. Many of our clients are at risk for or currently have a diet-related chronic illness. In addition, many of our clients face significant barriers when it comes to accessing food they want and need to eat. Providers can give clients the educational tools to eat healthier or maintain a diet that can manage their illness, but this means nothing if people cannot afford or get to the food prescribed to them by their provider. Food access is a vital component of healthcare and it will take systematic change in our food systems to provide equitable access for all.¹

Although COVID-19 did not create food insecurity in Maryland, it certainly exasperated an already pervasive crisis. It is essential that our food system is reimagined for times of emergency as well as normalcy. The creation of a Maryland Food System Resiliency Council will foster systematic change, guidance, and research. Its emphasis on developing policy recommendations to address racial inequities and diet-related health disparities will impact not just the clients served at Health Care for the Homeless but Marylanders across the state. For these reasons, we support SB 723 and urge a favorable report.

For more information, please contact Lauren Talley, Engagement and Policy Assistant, ltalley@hchmd.org. Ms. Talley focuses her work on food justice issues.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland's leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We work to prevent and end homelessness for vulnerable individuals and families by providing quality, integrated health care and promoting access to affordable housing and sustainable incomes through direct service, advocacy, and community engagement. We deliver integrated medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, and housing support services for over 10,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.

¹ See <https://community-wealth.org/content/building-case-racial-equity-food-system>

Support of SB 723 - Maryland Food System Resilienc

Uploaded by: Ferguson, Colby

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 4, 2021

To: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of SB 723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 723, legislation that establishes the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. The council is to address the food insecurity crisis in the State due to the 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. MDFB Executive Director or designee is listed as one of the 26 council members.

MDFB Policy: We encourage State and Local agencies and institutions to purchase all types of Maryland agricultural commodities and products.

We oppose any state food policy that limits, impairs, restricts, or bans the purchase of agricultural commodities produced in Maryland by State or Local agencies and institutions.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 723 AND ENCOURAGE A FAVORABLE REPORT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396

MDGA_Senator Hester_FAV_SB723.pdf

Uploaded by: Fry Hester, Katie

Position: FAV

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



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KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 11, 2020

Testimony in Support of SB723 - Consumer Protection - Right to Repair

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of SB723. This bill will require original equipment manufacturers to provide independent repair providers with documentation, tools, or other information necessary to repair a product. This would increase the longevity of equipment that many of us use, and prevent equipment manufacturers from shutting repair providers out of the marketplace, effectively creating a monopoly for their own benefit.

This legislation is modeled after a Massachusetts law passed by ballot initiative in 2012 to require that vehicle owners and independent repair facilities have access to adequate vehicle diagnostic and repair information. After that law went into effect, car manufacturers and independent repair shops voluntarily entered a national agreement in line with the Massachusetts law. Essentially, this policy has been in effect in Maryland since 2014 for the auto industry. This bill intends to apply that same model to all consumer electronics and equipment, extending the right to repair to a broader range of products. I will note that some members of the industry are voluntarily moving in this direction, but others are lagging behind. This legislation keeps industry moving at a steady pace towards these goals for the benefit of all our constituents.

As you will see in the accompanying testimony, this legislation has the potential to make our consumption of manufactured goods more sustainable, the ability to repair more accessible, and the repair market as a whole more competitive. On behalf of Maryland's consumers and citizens, **I respectfully urge a favorable report for SB723.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard and Carroll Counties

Share Our Strength - Testimony in Support - SB723

Uploaded by: Holmes, Ayesha

Position: FAV



SB723 – SUPPORT
Ayesha Holmes
Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry
aholmes@strength.org (410)205.1016

SB723 Support
Maryland Food System Resiliency Council
Environment and Transportation
February 4, 2021

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

Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Maryland campaign strongly supports SB723, which would establish a Food System Resiliency Council. No Kid Hungry Maryland is a campaign of national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength. Since 2008, Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Maryland campaign has worked with partners, schools, and advocates to end childhood hunger throughout the state. No Kid Hungry Maryland leads the Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland.

Twenty-two percent (22%) of kids in Maryland are growing up in a family that struggles with hunger. We know that food insecurity can lead to long-term health and social detriments. During this historic time with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our food systems and greater economy, the number of families with children struggling with food insecurity has grown. Many families who never imagined needing assistance have had to rely heavily on the formal and informal food assistance programs in their community. Many of the families are not eligible for SNAP or other Federal Nutrition Programs, and must rely on Maryland to provide much needed vital aid through community-based responses.

During this time, with the increased challenges posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, this council is especially important. By establishing this office under the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, it formalizes the activities within the food system to be able to respond to challenges. What we have learned over the past months related to ease of access, coordination and gaps within our food system structures highlights the need to develop a coordinated effort to address this basic need.

A Statewide Food Resiliency Council would be able to build on local efforts and develop a collaborative way to comprehensively address the issues of food distribution, access, and food system alignment that is exacerbating the crisis of hunger and racial disparities. Multiple states through out the country, such as Colorado, Connecticut, Nevada and Massachusetts have developed structures such as the Food Council. This legislation will provide the framework for the administration to collaborate with key food system partners in Maryland to advance a resilient, equitable and sustainable food system.

In closing, we strongly support SB723 and encourage you to vote in favor of developing a Food System Resiliency Council for Maryland.

SB0723 Howard Co BOE Testimony 030421 for EHEA - F

Uploaded by: Howard County, BOE

Position: FAV



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 4, 2021**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

Chao Wu, Ph.D.
Chair

Jennifer Swickard Mallo
Vice Chair

Vicky Cutroneo

Christina Delmont-Small

Yun Lu, Ph.D.

Jolene Mosley

Antonia Watts

Zachary F. Koung
Student Member

Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.
*Superintendent
Secretary/Treasurer*

**SB0723: FAVORABLE
Maryland Food System Resiliency Council**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **SB0723 Maryland Food System Resiliency Council** as a comprehensive look at the issue of food insecurity and the role school systems play in feeding youth across the State.

SB0723/HB0831 creates a statewide Food System Resiliency Council made up of varied stakeholders related to food access and services, including a representative of local public school systems. The goals of the council include (I) To address the food insecurity crisis resulting from the COVID-10 pandemic and resulting economic crisis; (II) To develop, on or before November 1, 2021, equity and sustainability recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system; (III) To expand the impact of existing Food Council organizations; (IV) To develop, on or before November 1, 2021, a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food. Specific to school systems, two subgoals of the above include (A) Exploring the role of and potential for the Federal Community Eligibility Provision to ensure all students in the State are fed; and (B) Making recommendations to the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland General Assembly to implement such findings.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the immense need for greater collaboration around the issue of food availability and sustainability. The Howard County Public School System's Food and Nutrition Service workers have served over 4 million free grab-and-go meals since schools first closed in March 2020. The Board supports the intent of this bill to take a closer look at the role of public food services and the impact coordinated efforts could have on students, as well as the State as a whole.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of SB0723 from this Committee, and thank local Howard County Senator Katie Fry Hester for sponsoring this important bill.

HB0831:SB0723 written testimony - SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Hulse, Heather

Position: FAV



info@marylandmarketmoney.org
www.marylandmarketmoney.org

House Environment and Transportation Committee
Bill #: HB 0831/SB 0723, Maryland Food System Resiliency Council
Hearing Date February 17, 2021
****SUPPORT ****

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Heather Hulse, and I am the Maryland Market Money (MMM) Program Coordinator and work for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) which is a Division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. My program is a statewide food access program that matches federal nutrition benefits spent at Maryland's farmers markets, and also offers technical assistance to Maryland's farmers market stakeholders. MMM is a partnership between SMADC and the Maryland Agricultural Resource-based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO).

My team supports the bills regarding the creation of a Maryland Food System Resiliency Council at the state level to coordinate efforts and eliminate duplication of efforts by regional food councils around the state. Food council support has been invaluable to our programmatic work in Maryland, especially since the arrival of the pandemic, where we've seen approximately a 60% increase in Marylanders receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/EBT) benefits from March to December of 2020. Food councils help us find funding, they advocate for us in terms of public policy, and they make strategic connections where we are otherwise unable. With food insecurity sharply increasing in Maryland in such a short span, we couldn't do what we do without them. The thought of having a statewide food council to support us and the regional food councils in our efforts in seeking and navigating the challenging landscape of State and Federal support would be a dream come true.

Programs like mine are run on a very tight budget with a skeleton crew to manage all the moving parts. We often lack the capacity to be able to take on wider-scale initiatives and projects that we'd like to tackle. We also often become the support system for stakeholders who are smaller-scale than us, like farmers markets, farmers, and food access and food insecurity nonprofits. Having a statewide food council to support us in return would be so incredibly helpful and effective to enable us to better support food-insecure Marylanders, Maryland farmers markets, and Maryland farmers more effectively. Food councils do such important work that runs the gamut from addressing food insecurity and food access to the increasingly important role of value chain coordination and ensuring that our food systems are stable, secure, and resilient with local sourcing from Maryland producers being made a priority. A vote of support for this bill would be a step toward helping Maryland's food systems and residents to safely come out on the other side of this unprecedented public health crisis.

Respectfully Submitted,
Heather Hulse

Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission, a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
P.O. Box 745, Hughesville, MD 20637
Phone: 240-528-8850 ~ Email: info@smadc.com



MAP - SB 723- MD Food System Resiliency Council -

Uploaded by: Jefferson , Stacey

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 723

Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

*Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 4, 2021*

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Julia Gross, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Catholic Charities
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
Representation Project
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Catholic Conference
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
Public Justice Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Stacey Jefferson, Co-Chair
P: 410-637-1900 ext 8578
C: 443-813-9231

E: stacey.jefferson@bhsbaltimore.org

Julia Gross, Co-Chair
P: 410-528-0021x6029

E: jgross@mdhungersolutions.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 723, which would establish the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency.

Among the many devastating impacts of COVID-19, the rise of food insecurity has forced hundreds of thousands of Marylanders to turn to community resources and safety net programs for the first time. In September 2020, over 844,000 individuals were registered to receive SNAP benefits, which was the highest participation rate in the history of the state. As our state continues to struggle with this elevated need, we must work to create a more cohesive system to assist those struggling with food insecurity.

Many localities have formed food councils across the state, such as the Montgomery County Food Council, Prince George's County Food Equity Council, Baltimore City Food Policy Action Coalition, Howard County Food Task Force, and many others. These groups have clearly demonstrated within the past year that providing a space for members of the food system to partner together is one of the most efficient and effective ways to mobilize efforts to assist those struggling with food insecurity. By including not only just advocates and the charitable sector (such as food banks and pantries), but also the retail sector, farms and farmworkers, food production teams, and government agencies, these local groups have been both successful and resilient in the face of incredible challenges.

However, these groups are also limited by the boundaries of their localities. Moving forward, it is critical for Maryland to learn from the state's experiences and failures of addressing food insecurity across the state during COVID-19. HB 831 works to ensure that the state will have the strong network foundation needed to respond to our current crisis and also better prepare for future ones.

The formation of a Food System Resiliency Council will help create a space for all food system stakeholders to come together to share best practices, promote successful policies and work towards a more long-term solutions to food insecurity in our state, ultimately forming a more equitable and sustainable food system in Maryland.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 723.

***Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP)** is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.*

MD Catholic Conference _FAV_SB0723.pdf

Uploaded by: Kraska, MJ

Position: FAV



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 04, 2021

SB 723

Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public-policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Senate Bill 723 establishes the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council; providing the goals of the Council are to address the food insecurity crisis in the State due to the pandemic, develop recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system.

Pope Francis tells us *“Food shortage is not something natural, it is not a given, something obvious or self-evident. The fact that today, well into the twenty-first century, so many people suffer from this scourge is due to a selfish and wrong distribution of resources, to the ‘merchandising’ of food. The earth, abused and exploited, continues in many parts of the world to yield its fruits, offering us the best of itself. The faces of the starving remind us that we have foiled its purposes. We have turned a gift with a universal destination into a privilege enjoyed by a select few. We have made the fruits of the earth – a gift to humanity – commodities for a few, thus engendering exclusion. The consumerism in which our societies are immersed has made us grow accustomed to excess and to the daily waste of food. At times we are no longer able even to see the just value of food, which goes far beyond mere economic parameters. We need to be reminded that food discarded is, in a certain sense stolen, from the table of poor and the starving. This reality invites us to reflect on the problem of unused and wasted food, and to identify ways and means which, by taking this problem seriously, can serve as a vehicle of solidarity and sharing with those most in need.”* Thus, Senate Bill 723 addresses the urgent crisis of food insecurity within the state of Maryland setting goals to end this crisis in pursuit of a common good.

For this reason the Conference appreciates your consideration and urges a favorable report for Senate Bill 723.

SB0723_FAV_Lantz.pdf

Uploaded by: Lantz, Willie

Position: FAV



March 2, 2021

BILL: SB0723: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: Letter of Support of Senate Bill 0723

BILL ANALYSIS: Establishing the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council; providing for the composition, co-chairs, co-vice chairs, and staffing of the Council; providing that a member of the Council may not receive compensation but may be reimbursed for certain expenses; authorizing the Council to establish certain subcommittees; specifying the duties of the Council; requiring the Council to submit certain reports to the General Assembly on or before certain dates; making this Act an emergency measure; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environment Affairs Committee:

The Western Maryland Food Council urges you to SUPPORT this bill to establish the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, as a formalized body to guide statewide food system activities in response to the challenges created by COVID-19, and with the intent to ensure a self-sufficient, sustainable local food economy for the long term, that can support nutritious, equitable food access and food security for all Marylanders.

Small food councils like ours have struggled to bring partners together to work on issues such as food access for needy families, supporting local farmers as they work to produce and distribute healthy food, working with healthcare providers to ensure educating people about healthy/mindful eating, and ensuring the sustainability of all parts of our local food system. The creation of the Maryland Food Resiliency Council will provide critical staffing support and framework for the administration and operation of collaboration between government and key food system community partners.

SB0723 will effectively foster a resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system in Maryland to respond to the emergency at hand, as well as for the long term. For these reasons, the Western Maryland Food Council supports SB0723 and urges you to vote FOR this bill.

Should you require additional information, please feel free to contact me at wlantz@umd.edu or 301-334-6966.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Willie Lantz, Jr.".

Willie Lantz, Jr.
Chair

SB723– Maryland Food System Resiliency Council- RM

Uploaded by: Matthews, Dakota

Position: FAV



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”

SB0723_Fav_Montgomery County Food Council.pdf

Uploaded by: Nardi, Catherine

Position: FAV



March 4, 2021

**2021 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
SBo723: Food System Resiliency Council**

BILL: SBo723: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
POSITION: Testimony of Support of Senate Bill 0723
BILL ANALYSIS: *Establishing the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council; providing for the composition, co-chairs, co-vice chairs, and staffing of the Council; providing that a member of the Council may not receive compensation but may be reimbursed for certain expenses; authorizing the Council to establish certain subcommittees; specifying the duties of the Council; requiring the Council to submit certain reports to the General Assembly on or before certain dates; making this Act an emergency measure; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.*

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

The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill to establish the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, as a formalized body to guide statewide food system activities in response to the challenges created by COVID-19, and with the intent to ensure a self-sufficient, sustainable local food economy for the long term, that can support nutritious, equitable food access and food security for all Marylanders.

The hunger crisis that developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in record-setting SNAP enrollment rates throughout the state of Maryland, an over 40% increase in demand amongst regional food assistance providers, and significant supply chain challenges that left grocery store and food bank shelves empty. Food Councils throughout the state mobilized immediately to respond to this crisis and to coordinate and implement food assistance efforts at the local, state, regional, and federal levels.

The Montgomery County Food Council convened more than 2,000 partners in 2020, and the collective impact of these collaborative efforts has been evident in the coordinated community-wide response to the pandemic hunger crisis. MCFC partnered with the County's Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to lead the Montgomery County COVID-19 Food Security Task Force, which has proved to be invaluable in guiding ongoing response efforts and cross-sector initiatives to meet the elevated food assistance needs. As a coalition, we are able to more efficiently address gaps in service, sustainably leverage limited resources, and support food assistance providers in a way that no one organization can alone. We have also worked closely with other Food Councils, community-based organizations, food and beverage businesses, farmers, government agencies, and other food system partners throughout Maryland and the DMV to identify and implement best practices, share information, and effectively leverage Federal and State resources in our local jurisdictions.

We strongly support this bill, which would formalize and expand upon the synergy and strength that has been built within the regional food security network in recent months. The need for thoughtful and creative coordination doesn't end at County borders-- connecting with partners throughout the State, including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and businesses, is critical to the success of short-term food access programs, as well as long-term strategic planning for a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system for Maryland and the region. By establishing a Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, we can ensure that there is an official and reliable structure to support this necessary work. We believe that formalizing a state-wide body that supports the regional food system will best help Maryland residents emerge from this current emergency, and to be prepared when other food emergencies arise.

A statewide Food Council would also be able to inform a broader, coordinated effort to address systemic inequities in the local food system. COVID-19 has exacerbated the effects of the existing crises of hunger and racial inequity. A Food System Resiliency Council will collaboratively build on local efforts to address statewide the challenges that communities of color have historically faced in accessing food and land, economic opportunities, and environmental justice, which are direct results of deep structural and systemic racism. As a coalition, we can make progress towards ending hunger and food insecurity, and establishing a more just, sustainable food system for the long term.

There are multiple states throughout the country that have enacted policies similar to SB0723, including Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Nevada, all with similar goals of leveraging statewide food system relationships to increase food security, increasing production, sales and

consumption of foods grown and made in-state, establishing protections for land and water resources, and strengthening partnerships between state agencies and community-based organizations. Food Councils throughout Maryland have been partnering in an informal community of practice for the past 8+ years, since the first Food Councils in Maryland were established in the early 2010's. However, productive and effective partnerships are limited by the capacity of individual Councils and a structural disconnect with local and state governments. This legislation will provide critical staffing support and framework for the administration and operation of collaboration between government and key food system community partners.

SBo723 will effectively foster a resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system in Maryland to respond to the emergency at hand, as well as for the long term. **For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports SBo723 and urges you to vote FOR this bill.**

The Montgomery County Food Council is a nonprofit organization that serves as the primary connection point for businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and residents around food system issues in our County. We bring together over 2,000 local and regional partners in community-wide education, advocacy, and capacity building initiatives. Our work cultivates a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system by enhancing food access for the over 100,000 at risk for hunger, expanding food education opportunities for all residents, supporting our County's farms and food and beverage businesses, and addressing the impact of local food production, distribution, consumption and recycling on our natural resources.

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

SB0723_FAV_Organizational Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Nardi, Catherine

Position: FAV

March 4, 2021

SBo723: Food System Resiliency Council

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

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to ask for your support of SBo723: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.

We believe that formalizing a state-wide body that supports the regional food system will best help Maryland residents emerge from this current emergency, and to be prepared when other food emergencies arise. SBo723 would formalize and expand upon the synergy and strength that has been built within the regional food security network in recent months. Collaboration amongst partners throughout the State, including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and businesses, is critical to the success of short-term food access programs, as well as long-term strategic planning for a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system for Maryland and the region.

Importantly, a Food System Resiliency Council could also help the State address the challenges that communities of color have historically faced in accessing food and economic opportunities, and seeking environmental justice, which are direct results of deep structural and systemic racism. As a coalition, we can make progress towards ending hunger and food insecurity, and establishing a more just, sustainable food system for the long term. **For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SBo723.**

The Montgomery County Food Council

4P Foods

Family Learning Solutions, Inc.

Mid-Atlantic Food Resilience and Access Coalition

No Kid Hungry, Maryland

The Western Maryland Food Council

Takoma Park Silver Spring Food Cooperative

Prince George's County Food Equity Council

Sisterhood of Salam Shalom Silver Spring

Critical Issues Forum

Current and Former Members of the Montgomery County Food Security Community Advisory Board, including Omayra Kazi, Rhona Reiss, Charmaine Howard, Vanessa Pierre

Takoma Alliance for Local Living Economy (TALLE), Takoma Park Mobilization

The Charles Koiner Conservancy for Urban Farming



Coop's Soups

Community FarmShare

*Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
(SMADC)*

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Fair Farms

Gaithersburg HELP



MRHA SB723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Uploaded by: Orosz, Samantha

Position: FAV



Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association

To the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

March 4, 2021

Senate Bill 723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, Senator Hester, and members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.

MRHA supports this legislation that would establish the goals of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council to address the food insecurity crisis in the State due to the pandemic and ensure longevity in the food procurement and distribution process across the state.

Rural and underserved communities face a host of challenges related to providing accessible and affordable food due to disadvantages in infrastructure, transportation, and economic development. This legislation would provide the necessary inquiries into these communities to determine solutions for ultimately providing sustainable food supply chains to ensure healthy and equitable food options for all rural residents.

MRHA's mission is to educate and advocate for the optimal health and wellness of rural communities and their residents. Membership is comprised of health departments, hospitals, community health centers, health professionals, and community members in rural Maryland.

Rural Maryland represents almost 80 percent of Maryland's land area and 25% of its population. Of Maryland's 24 counties, 18 are considered rural by the state, and with a population of over 1.6 million they differ greatly from the urban areas in the state.

And while Maryland is one of the richest states, there is great disparity in how wealth is distributed. The greatest portion of wealth resides around the Baltimore/Washington Region; while further away from the I-95 corridor, differences in the social and economic environment are very apparent.

MRHA believes this legislation is important to support our rural communities and we thank you for your consideration.

Lara Wilson, Executive Director, larawilson@mdruralhealth.org, 410-693-6988

SB723_oral_Palmer_3_4_21.pdf

Uploaded by: Palmer, Anne

Position: FAV

Testimony before the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee

March 4, 2021

In SUPPORT of **Senate Bill 723**: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Presented by Anne Palmer

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Johns Hopkins University.

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Anne Palmer and I am an associate scientist at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, and a program director at the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, an academic center focused on food systems and public health. In my role at the Center, I direct a project called Food Policy Networks, which builds the capacity of food policy councils throughout the US through technical assistance, resource development, and networking. The views expressed here are my own.

If there was ever a time for food policy councils to prove their value, it has been during the pandemic. Our research found that states and local jurisdictions with active food councils have responded quickly and steadfastly to meet their communities' needs. Eleven months into the pandemic, they continue to play a key role.

In our region, the Montgomery County Food Council serves as the lead nonprofit guiding the County's food security efforts, ensuring a coordinated response to the increased food needs that also leverages local food producers. Frederick County Food Council launched an online market with 103 members and 9 producers. Baltimore Food Policy Initiative implemented a large scale grocery and meal distribution city wide, implemented online SNAP, and secured state and federal funding for food. Prince George's County Food Equity Council connected regional food hubs, restaurants, farmers markets, and growers to market opportunities that address both their needs and the needs of food-insecure residents.

At the state level, the Delaware Food and Farm Council coordinated with state and local food providers, cooperative extension, and other agencies to collect and assess data related to food distribution to improve sustainability. They also amended their existing statewide food resources map to identify COVID-specific food resources at the community level.

In Pennsylvania, the Governor's Food Security Partnership advocated for waivers from USDA that were important for inclusive school meals programs and SNAP access. The MD Food System Resiliency Council could play a similar role in our state - leveraging relationships, expertise and resources to meet urgent and longer term needs that lead to healthier, more resilient food systems.

I applaud Senate Bill 732 for proposing the establishment of a food system resiliency council. The pandemic has exposed what we have known all along. Food system issues are best understood by bringing together a variety of stakeholders, all of whom have knowledge and expertise that is needed to solve so many of our problems. Let's not wait until the next pandemic or natural disaster to take action on what we know is an important investment. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

SB 723 - HB 831 CareFirst Testimony - Support.PDF

Uploaded by: Rivkin, Deborah

Position: FAV

Deborah Rivkin
Vice President
Government Affairs – Maryland

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
1501 S. Clinton Street, Suite 700
Baltimore, MD 21224-5744
Tel. 410-528-7054
Fax 410-528-7981



HB 831/ SB 723 – Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Position: Support

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments in support of House Bill 831 / Senate Bill 723. This bill establishes the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council to address food insecurity by coordinating state and local level food insecurity services; tracking and analyzing data to create a food insecurity map; leveraging federal and private sector grants; and advising the state to allocate resources to address needs. The Council is also charged with developing equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system and a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food, before November 1, 2021.

As part of our mission, CareFirst is committed to driving transformation of the healthcare experience with and for all our members and communities, with a focus on quality, equity, affordability, and access to care. According to the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, health care only accounts for 20% of the overall external influence on a person's health, but socioeconomic factors, physical environment, and healthy behaviors such as diet (i.e. social determinants of health) contribute to 70% of that influence. House Bill 831 / Senate Bill 723 establishes a statewide cross functional Council that will review data, identify the root causes and scope of food insecurity in Maryland, and develop meaningful recommendations to address one of the most impactful social determinants of health—access to healthy food. We believe the work produced by the Council would lead to concrete policies and programs that mitigate the impact of food insecurity, promote access to nutritious food, improve health outcomes, and reduce existing health disparities in traditionally underserved communities.

CareFirst has committed \$10 million in regional funding to address diabetes and its upstream social determinants of health, in six targeted communities, including West Baltimore and Prince George's County, where many Maryland residents experience issues with food insecurity. We are also deploying place-based strategies to guide our community investment in social determinants of health and improve community health outcomes.

CareFirst strongly supports the policy goals advanced by House Bill 831 / Senate Bill 723. We look forward to partnering with legislators, state and local agencies, food organizations, and other stakeholders to advance health equity, as we continue to focus on targeted strategies outside and within our own organization to ensure the health and wellbeing of our members, employees, and communities.

We urge a favorable report.

About CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

In its 83rd year of service, CareFirst, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit healthcare company which, through its affiliates and subsidiaries, offers a comprehensive portfolio of health insurance products and administrative services to 3.4 million individuals and employers in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. In 2019, CareFirst invested \$43 million to improve overall health, and increase the accessibility, affordability, safety, and quality of healthcare throughout its market areas. To learn more about CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, visit our website at www.carefirst.com and our transforming healthcare page at www.carefirst.com/transformation, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram](#).

SB0723 - FAV - Maryland Hunger Solutions.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Robinson, JD

Position: FAV



Maryland Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger and promoting well-being

**Testimony in Support of SB0723
Maryland Food System Resiliency Council
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
March 4, 2021**

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

Maryland Hunger Solutions is a statewide, non-partisan, non-profit organization working to end hunger and improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of individuals, children, and families in Maryland. Maryland Hunger Solutions strives to overcome barriers and create self-sustaining connections between Maryland residents and nutritious foods through education, advocacy, and outreach.

It is within that regard that we are testifying in support of SB0723, which would establish the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency. Maryland Hunger Solutions is a part of multiple county and city level councils; the Montgomery County Food Council, the Prince George's County Food Equity Council, and the Baltimore City Food Policy Action Coalition. We also worked with the Howard County Food Task Force. Our work with these groups has shown that bringing together members of every aspect of the food system can produce astounding effects in mobilizing efforts to assist those struggling with food insecurity.

It would have been helpful to have had the various elements of the food system connected on a policy level prior to the pandemic. It would be a mistake of historic proportions to not use our pandemic experience to address challenges to the food system, especially the challenges of food insecurity for Marylanders all across our state.

When describing the food system, we don't simply mean buying groceries and using the food banks. We mean the entire system. This includes agriculture (farms and farmworkers), food processing (production, processing and shipping), retail food (grocery stores, farmers markets and corner stores), the charitable sector (food banks, food pantries, and meal services), restaurants, the non-profit sector, and the government (the state departments of human services, health, agriculture and education). This will include understanding the role of food deserts and food swamps as part of the food system, as well as federal anti-hunger programs. The food system as it exists is complicated and has many cross-cutting connections. The state of Maryland is the best entity to examine this system, to make connections, to share best practices, and to promote successful policies and to engage with partners.

Local county-based and regional collaborations already exist in our state. They are great examples of what needs to be upgraded to a state level, with an eye on supporting existing efforts. Our role as a statewide anti-hunger organization has enabled us to interact with numerous partners around the state. Their input into this legislation – and more importantly – with the proposed resiliency council – is critical in informing our processes and helping this council be successful.

We are aware that our work touches on part of the system, but it has been instructive how local councils have been integral in our work. For example, in September of 2020, Maryland registered the highest SNAP participation in the state's history – over 844,000 individuals. No local group can help share resources with each of these participants. How can we ensure that they are connected to other programs they might be eligible for in other state agencies – like school meals and WIC? Which Food Bank might provide them with resources – the Maryland Food Bank, the Capital Area Food Bank, the Howard County Food Bank, MANNA Food Center in Montgomery County, the Southern Maryland Food Bank – or are there local pantries? Our experience shows that local meal services pop up, but not all of them are sustainable.

It's important to acknowledge that local groups have been both successful and resilient in the face of overwhelming challenges. Our work with the Montgomery County Food Council helped to establish their Senior SNAP Program where we have trained over 50 staff and volunteers to visit nearly 20 senior residences and centers throughout the county to assist older Americans in applying for SNAP. The Prince George's County Food Equity Council immediately stepped up to provide resources and volunteers to assist in responding to our call line when the pandemic began. The Baltimore City Food Policy Action Coalition quickly mobilized stakeholders from government agencies and healthcare groups in response to a federal policy change affecting able-bodied adults without dependents. And the Roving Radish, a local meal kit service in Howard County which was a project which came out of the county-led Food Policy Task Force, remains an excellent example of public-private partnerships.

However, the work of these county and city councils is limited to their respective borders, and their efforts and coordination must be applied with a statewide lens. A connected group of organizations representing nonprofits, the charitable sector, agriculture, businesses, and government agencies is vital to short-term fixes and long-term solutions. Establishing this statewide council would ensure building the foundation needed to achieve these goals thoughtfully and creatively, in response to the current crisis and to be prepared for future ones.

Maryland would join multiple states throughout the country that have coordinated similar efforts. Delaware, Massachusetts, Colorado, and others have established statewide councils with the goals of increasing food security, expanding production and consumption of produce grown in-state, and strengthening relationships between community based organizations and state agencies. Our work with the Maryland Department of Human Resources as an official state SNAP Outreach partner has allowed us and other partners to have open lines of communication

with the state. This has proven to be an invaluable partnership, and ensures we are delivering correct information to the communities we serve.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has proven that these councils help. Each of the three coalitions were able to move swiftly and effectively in sharing resources and best practices with others in response to the pandemic. They may not have solved all of the problems of their local food systems, but they have provided thoughtful coordination at the time when it was most needed. It is beyond time that a similar coalition was brought together to coordinate the fight against food insecurity at the state-level, especially during times of crisis. The Food System Resiliency Council will help build a resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system in Maryland for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration, Maryland Hunger Solutions **urges a favorable report on SB0723.**

Support SB 723 Maryland Food System Resiliency Cou

Uploaded by: Smith-Bell, Melanie

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 723
Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Position: Support

March 2, 2021

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

We are writing on behalf of Community FARE in support of Senate Bill 723 to establish the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency in response to the challenges created by COVID-19. SB 723 would facilitate collaboration among nonprofit organizations such as ours, along with government agencies, and local farm and food businesses, to assist in strategic planning for a more sustainable local food economy and provide food security and equitable access to nutritious food for all Marylanders.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in supply chain challenges, while SNAP enrollment rates have risen to record levels in the state of Maryland. Demand has increased for those providing assistance to the food insecure, with the Maryland Food Bank citing an 89% increase in food distribution between March and December of last year.

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. To date we support:

- The Frederick County Food Council, which was launched along with community partners from Fox Haven Organic Farm and food system professionals from Center for a Livable Future with three working groups focusing on equity and access, education and outreach, and the agricultural economy.

- Frederick MD Farm to School, a Community FARE program in partnership with Frederick County Public Schools, works to implement the objectives of the Frederick County Food Council in the specific context of the public school institution. Due to Covid-19, Farm to School is working alongside Frederick's Blessings in a Backpack program to distribute fresh food from local farms to food insecure families at school lunch distribution sites, including educational information about nutrition and preparation of the food.
- Frederick Fresh Online is a web-based market launched by our Frederick County Food Council's Ag Economy Working Group in order to provide opportunity for our farmers and other food businesses to be able to scale up to produce local food for local markets with minimal risk.

Expansion of opportunities for organizations like Community FARE to collaborate with other agencies and businesses in order to better serve the residents of Maryland can strengthen these beneficial projects and facilitate new ones that will assist individuals in need, as well as support the economic interests of our small and mid-sized farm and food businesses.

It is for the reasons stated above that we urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 723.

Respectfully,

Janice Wiles
 Director, [Community FARE](#)
 Food Advocacy Resources Education
[Farm to School](#) / [Frederick County Food Council](#)
 (240) 626 5209 janice@communityfare.org

Lee Babcock
 Frederick County Food Council
 Co-Chair Ag Economy Working Group

Melanie Smith-Bell
 Communications & Outreach
 Coordinator, Community FARE
 (301) 768-3354

Alysia Mason Feuer, MPH, RD
 Director, Farm to School Program
[Frederick County Farm to School](#)
 443-366-5670

JoAnn Coates-Hunter
 Community FARE Advisory Board
 Director, Fox Haven Organic Farm & Learning
 Center

Monica Miles
 Frederick County Food Council
 Ag Economy Working Group Leadership Team

Lisa Orr
 Community FARE Advisory Board
 Frederick County Food Council
 Ag Economy Working Group Leadership Team

Laura Genello
 Frederick County Food Council
 Ag Economy Working Group Leadership Team
 Farmer: Dandelion & Rust Farm

2021 MFeast SB 723 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Elliott, Robyn

Position: FWA



Committee: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Hearing Date: March 3, 2021

Position: Support with Amendments

Moveable Feast supports *Senate Bill 723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council* and requests an amendment to include additional expertise. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of our food system. Since mid-March 2020, numerous surveys have documented unprecedented levels of food insecurity that eclipse anything seen in recent decades in the United States, including during the Great Recession. Food System Resiliency is an effort to make sure that another pandemic, the impact of climate change, or other crisis does not put in jeopardy people's access to adequate food.

This legislation creates a council not just made up of representatives from the agricultural sector, but also the public health sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a public health and economic crisis. One of the goals for the proposed council is to address and eliminate diet-related public health disparities. Part of Moveable Feast's mission is to prepare and deliver medically tailored meals and groceries to people living with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other life-threatening illnesses. The concept of Food is Medicine which we strongly support, is to advance public policy that supports access to food and nutrition services for people with severe and/or chronic illnesses. This concept should be integrated into the work of this Food System Resiliency Council.

We therefore ask for an amendment to add expertise in this area:

On page 3, after line 23, insert:

"ONE EXPERT ON MEDICALLY TAILORED MEALS FOR PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS; AND

Our clients, who are living with serious chronic diseases, are impacted by inequities created by institutional racism. This includes the disparities related to access to food, housing, and health care. Ensuring that the State creates a food system that assures access during a crisis to nutritious food, not just any food, must be part of an equitable system.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote with this amendment. If we can provide any further information, please contact Ann Ciekot at aciekot@policypartners.net or 410-207-3189.

901 North Milton Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21205 • 410.327.3420 • 410.327.3426 Fax • www.mfeast.org

Moveable Feast is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization, contributions to which are tax-deductible. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting our accounting office. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.

2021 SB723 MD Food System Resiliency Council.pdf

Uploaded by: Porter, Holly

Position: FWA



Educate. Advocate. Innovate.

Date: March 2, 2021
To: Members of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
From: Holly Porter, Executive Director
Re: SB 723 – Maryland Food System Resiliency Council – Support with Amendments

Delmarva Chicken Association (formerly Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.), the 1,600-member trade association representing the meat-chicken growers, processing companies and allied business members on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and Delaware supports SB 723 with one amendment – to include “*the executive director of the Delmarva Chicken Association, or the Executive Director’s Designee;*” and asks for a favorable committee report.

SB 723 would establish a Maryland Food System Resiliency Council to address food insecurity, especially during emergencies such as the pandemic, as well as to increase long-term resiliency of our Maryland food system.

As the largest sector of the agricultural industry in Maryland, the chicken community certainly stepped up during this current pandemic. When the marketplace changed virtually overnight with the closing of restaurants and schools, the chicken companies pivoted as quickly as possible to adapt to those changes. They purchased additional packaging materials, adjusted processing cuts and equipment and reached out to new markets. Considering the overnight adjustments, the resiliency of our food system stood strong, with very few days or even weeks that consumers were not able to find chicken on the grocery store shelves. The companies also started offering truck sales to get this healthy protein into the hands of Maryland residents at below retail prices, often taking a significant cut in profit. And the companies donated millions of pounds of chicken to food banks and organizations across Maryland and the Delmarva region.

The Delmarva chicken community is proud to be a strong part of the food system in Maryland, producing a locally raised, locally fed and locally harvested, healthy source of protein and we feel it would be important to be represented on the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.

With the amendment of including the *executive director of the Delmarva Chicken Association or designee*, we urge a **favorable** committee report on SB 723.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at porter@dcachicken.com or 302-222-4069 or Nick Manis, Manis Canning & Associates, 410-263-7882.

1b - Sb 723 - EHEA - MDH - LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Office of Governmental Affairs, Maryland Department of Health

Position: INFO



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

March 4, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD, 21401

RE: Senate Bill 723 – Maryland Food System Resiliency Council – Letter of Information

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information on Senate Bill (SB) 723– Maryland Food System Resiliency Council.

SB 723 establishes the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council and requires the Secretary of Health or the Secretary’s designee to be a member of the Council. Due to ongoing COVID-19 response efforts, MDH unfortunately does not have the personnel resources to participate if this bill is passed. Many of MDH’s current employees have already increased their workload and absorbed additional tasks that are critical to the COVID-19 response.

We recognize and value the importance of this bill and its impact on Marylanders. As such, we respectfully request this bill be held and reintroduced in the 2022 Session or that MDH joins the Council in 2023. We look forward to working with the bill sponsor(s) and appropriate stakeholders in the interim.

I hope this information is useful. If you have questions or need more information about this subject, please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 260-3190 or webster.ye@maryland.gov or Director of Governmental Affairs, Heather Shek, at heather.shek@maryland.gov or the same number.

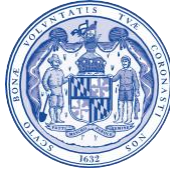
Sincerely,

Webster Ye
Assistant Secretary for Health Policy

SB723LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Kelly, Catherine

Position: INFO



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

STATE OF MARYLAND
MILITARY DEPARTMENT
FIFTH REGIMENT ARMORY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201-2288

TIMOTHY E. GOWEN
MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

March 4, 2021

Senator Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 723 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council – Letter of Information

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

I write to share information on the above referenced Senate bill, which would establish a statewide Food System Resiliency Council. The new Council would meet regularly for at least two years to address the food insecurity crisis in the State. The Director of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), would have a large role in both the formation and execution of the Council. The Director or his designee would co-chair the Council, and would be responsible for appointing members, per the requirements in the bill.

MEMA has the institutional expertise necessary to take on the roles described in the legislation. As the State agency most accustomed to coordination among other state agencies, MEMA is well-suited for the coordination responsibilities given to the Director. MEMA has successfully led several multiagency coordination efforts for both acute emergencies as well as long-term efforts to reduce disaster risk. Additionally, MEMA has both experienced and institutional expertise in the broader topic of resilience. Food resilience is a subcomponent of that broader topic.

Neither the MEMA Director nor its staff are subject matter experts in food security. In order for this Council to be successful, MEMA would rely on significant input from both other state agencies and public and private organizations. We anticipate, for example, relying on the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, the Department of Agriculture, as well as the Maryland Food Bank give guidance on issues related specifically to food security.

We also believe the Council would benefit from the expertise of local officials, who have more of an “on the ground” perspective of the relevant issues. We would recommend that a member of the Maryland Association of Counties or other local representative should have a place on the Council.

Given the requirements to effectively coordinate the council, meeting schedule, the reporting requirements, and the breadth of the council’s stated goals, we believe this will require additional dedicated resources for this effort. It is our hope that this information will be heavily weighted as the Committee considers SB723.

Thank you for your support of the Maryland Military Department. We would be happy to provide any additional information if required. Please feel free to reach out by e-mail catherine.a.kelly26.nfg@mail.mil or by phone 410-446-5390.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Kelly

Catherine A. Kelly
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