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Date: February 15, 2021
To: Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee
From: Holly Porter, Executive Director
Re: HB 831 – 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 HB 831 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.

HB 831 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 HB 831.

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.