
MARYLAND ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



Date: February 9, 2021
Bill: SB 365 – Neighborhood Business Development Program – Food Desert Projects – Retention Program
Committee: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair
Position: Support

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND) is an organization representing approximately 1,200 licensed dietitians and nutritionists, dietetic interns, and students within the state of Maryland.

Senate Bill 365 will expand the purposes of the Neighborhood Business Development Program to include retaining certain businesses and enterprises in food deserts and certain areas that serve food deserts and increase to \$100,000 the maximum amount of a certain small loan that may be provided to an approved entity for assistance in providing or maintaining access to healthy food in certain food deserts.

Millions of people in the US and around the world live in food deserts areas where its hard or even impossible to find healthy foods. These deserts promote poor health outcomes and are a pull on our economy and reinforce the worst effects of racism.

Food deserts are known as areas without access to nutritious, high quality, affordable food. The USDA describes them as any area with a 20% or greater poverty rate, and where a third or more of the residents live more than a mile away from a supermarket.

Food deserts appear to be predominantly in areas of low income, areas where residents often don't have cars, and they are almost always communities of color. It's a sad public health concern in which health outcomes are worst for people of lower income. And on account of a legacy of racism, people of color are more likely to fall into low-income groups.

In fact, studies have illustrated that Black Americans are nearly 400% more likely than white Americans to live in a neighborhood or community that lacks a full-service supermarket.

Therefore there is a great need for **SB0365 - Neighborhood Business Development Program -Food Desert Project** to assist with the elimination of poor health outcomes due to lack of nutritious and affordable food and to right the wrong of systematic racism.

For these reasons we ask for a FAVORABLE report on SB365.

Dr. Glenda L. Lindsey , Dr. PH, MS, RDN, LDN
Public Policy Coordinator
Public Policy Panel

**Reference: From Food Deserts to Food Oases: Addressing Access to Healthy Food. food revolutions.org
Ocean Robbins. Sept 11, 2020. Retrieved Feb 3, 2021**