



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**February 17, 2021**

**HB 831**

**Maryland Food System Resiliency Council**

**House Environment & Transportation 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.

House Bill 831 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, House Bill 831 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 House Bill 831.