

*Bita Dayhoff, President*

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February 22, 2021

Dear Senator Hester,

On behalf of Community Action Council of Howard County, I fully support SB769 which offers a modest alteration to the excising income tax credit program in order to offset the rising cost of venison processing and increases the opportunity for donation of venison to local food banks.

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Howard County Food Bank has seen an increase of 300% in demand for food assistance. At the same time, it has experienced a reduction in donations which has forced us to purchase food from the Maryland Food Bank or other local grocery stores in order to meet the high demand.

To further complicate matters, the prices at the grocery stores have skyrocketed making it harder for those who are struggling to make ends meet as well as for the food banks. From February to June of last year, meat and poultry prices rose nearly 11%, with beef and veal prices seeing the highest rise, spiking 20%. People are paying more for other staples too: egg prices have shot up 10% and shoppers are shelling out 4% more for cereals and fresh vegetables. These high costs have created a shortage of available protein which can be overcome by introducing venison in the diet.

This is a win/win situation that can support the families needing food, the food bank looking for donations and the farmers whose crop can be protected from damage from deer.

Any opportunity to increase the capacity and opportunity for the individuals to donate should be maximized in order to weather the pandemic storm. As such, we fully support the increase in State income tax credit for those who hunt and harvest and donate the processed deer meat to their local food banks.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Regards,

*Bita Dayhoff*

President