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BILL NO.: House Bill 680

TITLE: Baltimore County – Property Tax Credit - Supermarkets

SPONSOR: Baltimore County Delegation

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 30, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 680 – Baltimore County – Property Tax Credit – Supermarkets. This legislation would allow Baltimore County to grant a tax credit to a supermarket in a designated food desert.

The disbursement of supermarkets across Maryland has created pockets where residents without personal transportation cannot access food, putting many at risk of food insecurity. The pandemic has created additional barriers to food accessibility by limiting the availability of transit and rising unemployment making basic needs unaffordable. Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski has implemented numerous services during the pandemic to combat food insecurity in Baltimore County, including expanded food distribution for elderly adults and a free grocery shuttle. While these initiatives have provided some relief, there is more work to be done.

House Bill 680 provides a tax credit for supermarkets locating in areas considered to be food deserts. By incentivizing supermarkets in areas of food insecurity, more residents of the State will have access to affordable and healthy food products. This will assist in cutting rates of hunger for all citizens of Maryland, regardless of their income.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 680. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.