

HB 179 Workgroup on Environments - Crossover Testi

Uploaded by: Brian Sims

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

March 31, 2022

To: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: Letter of Support- House Bill 179 - Counties and State Legislative Districts - Food Environment Reports

Dear Chair Pinsky:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 179.

Access to nutritious food is essential to achieve optimal health and ensure health equity for all Marylanders. HB 179 will create a workgroup to identify a cost-effective way to produce food environment reports for jurisdictions around the state. These reports will improve our understanding and awareness of food security across the state, supporting efforts to advance population health and health equity initiatives in Maryland.

Almost one in three Marylanders are food insecure and the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically increased food insecurity statewide.¹ Widespread job losses, financial hardships, and school closures contributed to a surge of Marylanders seeking food assistance. From March to December 2020, 12.2% of the state's households received assistance—with every county impacted.² The Maryland Food Bank served 43 million meals between March and December—an 89% increase from the same period in 2019.³ Black and Hispanic families were twice as likely as white families to be food insecure.⁴ Combating food insecurity is crucial to achieve racial equity in social determinants of health.

Food insecurity prevents people from consuming a balanced diet and harms overall health. Unhealthy diets contribute to chronic diseases like diabetes and malnutrition if a person's healthy food intake is insufficient. Malnutrition can lead to diseases like hypertension and behavioral health issues like depression or anxiety.⁵ For children, food insecurity may cause developmental problems. Gathering data and identifying areas as food insecurity zones will allow us to better meet the needs of individual communities and promote the health of all Marylanders.

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report on HB 179.

For more information, please contact:
Brian Sims, Director, Quality & Health Improvement
Bsims@mhaonline.org

¹ Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (2021). "[Interim Report to the Maryland General Assembly](#)"

² Maryland Hunger Solutions. (2021). "[2021 Maryland County Hunger Profiles](#)."

³ The Maryland Food Bank. (n.d.). "[The Maryland Food Bank's COVID-19 Response](#)."

⁴ Harvard School of Public Health. (2020). "[Nearly four in 10 Black, Hispanic Families Facing Food Insecurity During Pandemic](#)."

⁵ American Hospital Association. (June, 2017). "[Social Determinants of Health Series: Food Insecurity and the Role of Hospitals](#)."

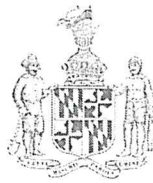
Workgroup on Food Environments

Uploaded by: Delegate Amprey Delegate Amprey

Position: FAV

MARLON AMPREY
Legislative District 40
Baltimore City

Environment and Transportation
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 311
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3520 • 301-858-3520
800-492-7122 Ext. 3520
Marlon.Amprey@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 31, 2022

**Testimony of Delegate Marlon Amprey in support of HB 179
Workgroup on Food Environments**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Healthy food priority areas (formerly called "food deserts") in low-income, predominantly Black and Brown communities contribute to malnutrition and perpetuate the cycle of chronic disease. These areas are defined as regions with the following characteristics: Distance to the supermarket is more than ¼ mile, median household income is at or below 185% federal poverty level, no vehicles in over 30% of households, and low average Healthy Food Accessibility Index (HFAI). In Maryland, 1 in 4 people face food insecurity. Approximately 216,000 out of 667,000 Marylanders facing hunger are children. These numbers are devastating, and serve as an urgent call for action for a multitude of reasons.

Citizens that live in healthy food priority areas suffer from higher rates of poverty and malnutrition. It is important to recognize that the term malnutrition does not just refer to undernutrition, but also refers to obesity. Populations that do not have access to healthy, nutritious food options can suffer the devastating health effects of both ends of the malnutrition spectrum. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, obesity is associated with a 50% increased chance of death. Meanwhile, undernourished people have weakened immune systems, which could make fighting off infection much harder. By failing to provide our communities with basic access to healthy food for themselves and for their families, we are failing their future health outcomes and effectively their ability to thrive as members of society. Food and nutrition is fundamental to our well-being, and we need to invest in policies that promote food equity.

According to the USDA, as policymakers consider interventions to increase food access, it is important to understand the characteristics associated with these areas, such as income, vehicle availability, and access to public transportation. Detailed food environment reports conducted in conjunction with the Baltimore City Department of

Planning and Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future have provided this kind of invaluable information so that policymakers can identify potential solutions to inequities in food access. As an example of the detail provided in these reports, the Baltimore City's 2018 Food Environment Report found about 23.5% of residents live in Healthy Food Priority Areas, children are the most likely of any age group to live in a Priority Area (28%), and black residents are the most likely of any racial or ethnic group to live in a Priority Area (31.5%). Since 2015, about 5,000 fewer residents live in Healthy Food Priority Areas, as a result of a new supermarket opening. The report also offers an updated and more comprehensive description of other elements of the food environment, including nutrition assistance programs and urban agriculture, to highlight additional points of access to healthy food. This information is critical in creating policy that may incentivize grocery stores or other community-based food vendors to establish locations in areas with the most need.

As we attempt to tackle the problem of inequity in terms of access to nutritious food, we must take a step back and remember that this is an immensely complex problem rooted in a variety of systemic issues. From structural racism to inequities in the transportation system, the food access issue in Maryland is multifaceted and requires deep investigation of the current issues at hand. This is impossible to do without a substantial investment in research. Data points are critical in informing effective policy, and if we truly want to make a difference in our communities, we must take an evidence-based approach. The reports offered by the Baltimore City Department of Planning and the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future offer invaluable insights into the ground-level needs of the community. This type of research must be replicated throughout all districts in Maryland so that we can begin the critical journey of improving access to nutritious food for all using a systems-based approach. It is important to consult the necessary stakeholders in order to make recommendations on cost-effective methods for creating similar food environment reports at the county level. Access to healthy food is a basic human right, and we must act now to advocate for our communities.

I urge a favorable report on House Bill 179.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Amprey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marlon" being more prominent than the last name "Amprey".

Delegate Marlon Amprey
40th Legislative District - MD



HB0179/433926/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

29 MAR 22
12:50:07

BY: Delegate Amprey

(To be offered in the Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 179

(Third Reading File Bill)

On page 3, in line 21, strike "Center for a Livable Future" and substitute "Bloomberg School of Public Health"; in line 22, strike "Director of the Center" and substitute "Dean of the School"; and in line 24, strike "appointed by the Governor" and substitute "designated by the members of the Workgroup identified in items (1) through (6) of this subsection".

UNOFFICIAL COPY OF HOUSE BILL 179

C8
HB 1325/21 - ENT

HOUSE BILL 179
(PRE-FILED)

2lr0867

By: **Delegate Amprey**
Requested: October 20, 2021
Introduced and read first time: January 12, 2022
Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
House action: Adopted
Read second time: March 13, 2022

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 ~~Counties and State Legislative Districts Food Environment Reports~~
3 Workgroup on Food Environments

4 FOR the purpose of ~~requiring the Department of Housing and Community Development,~~
5 ~~the Department of Planning, the Department of Human Services, and the~~
6 ~~Department of Agriculture to jointly produce a report for each county and each State~~
7 ~~legislative district on the food environment in the county and district on or before a~~
8 ~~certain date and at a certain frequency thereafter, and submit the report to the~~
9 ~~General Assembly, and generally relating to food environments in State legislative~~
10 ~~districts~~ establishing the Workgroup on Food Environments to determine and make
11 recommendations regarding the most cost-effective method for producing a report
12 on the food environment in each county and State legislative district; and generally
13 relating to the Workgroup on Food Environments.

14 ~~BY adding to~~
15 ~~Article Housing and Community Development~~
16 ~~Section 6-308.5~~
17 ~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~
18 ~~(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)~~

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
20 That ~~the Laws of Maryland read as follows:~~

21 Article Housing and Community Development

2

UNOFFICIAL COPY OF HOUSE BILL 179

1 ~~6-308.5.~~

2 ~~(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS~~
3 ~~INDICATED.~~

4 ~~(2) "SNAP" MEANS THE FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION~~
5 ~~ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.~~

6 ~~(3) "WIC" MEANS THE FEDERAL SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD~~
7 ~~PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN.~~

8 ~~(B) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2022, AND ON OR BEFORE JULY 1 EVERY 2~~
9 ~~YEARS THEREAFTER, THE DEPARTMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, THE~~
10 ~~DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE~~
11 ~~SHALL JOINTLY PRODUCE A REPORT FOR EACH COUNTY AND EACH STATE~~
12 ~~LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT ON THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTY AND THE~~
13 ~~DISTRICT.~~

14 ~~(C) THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE:~~

15 ~~(1) THE METRICS THAT DETERMINE FOOD INSECURITY ZONES;~~

16 ~~(2) DETAILED METRICS THAT IDENTIFY THE HEALTH FOOD~~
17 ~~AVAILABILITY INDEX FOR EACH COUNTY AND EACH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT, TAKING~~
18 ~~INTO ACCOUNT THE DENSITY, POPULATION, AND TRANSPORTATION METHODS USED~~
19 ~~IN EACH COUNTY AND DISTRICT;~~

20 ~~(3) THE NUMBER OF GROCERY STORES AND SUPERMARKETS~~
21 ~~OFFERING FRESH FOOD IN EACH COUNTY AND EACH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT;~~

22 ~~(4) THE NUMBER OF SNAP AND WIC RECIPIENTS IN EACH COUNTY~~
23 ~~AND EACH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT; AND~~

24 ~~(5) WHICH STORES ACCEPT PURCHASES MADE WITH SNAP AND WIC~~
25 ~~BENEFITS IN EACH COUNTY AND EACH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT.~~

26 ~~(D) IN PRODUCING THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER THIS SECTION, THE~~
27 ~~DEPARTMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN~~
28 ~~SERVICES, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE MAY COLLABORATE WITH:~~

29 ~~(1) ANY UNIVERSITY IN THE STATE;~~

UNOFFICIAL COPY OF HOUSE BILL 179

~~(2) ANY NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OR ASSOCIATION THAT SPECIALIZES IN EQUITY FOR HEALTH AND FOOD PRIORITY AREAS; AND~~

~~(3) ANY LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING OR EQUIVALENT DEPARTMENT.~~

~~(E) THE DEPARTMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SHALL SUBMIT THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER THIS SECTION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.~~

(a) There is a Workgroup on Food Environments.

(b) The Workgroup consists of the following members:

(1) two members of the Maryland Association of Counties, designated by the Executive Director of the Association;

(2) the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Community Development, or the Secretary's designee;

(3) the Secretary of the Department of Planning, or the Secretary's designee;

(4) the Secretary of the Department of Human Services, or the Secretary's designee;

(5) the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, or the Secretary's designee;

(6) a representative of the Johns Hopkins ~~Center for a Livable Future~~ Bloomberg School of Public Health, designated by the ~~Director of the Center~~ Dean of the School; and

(7) one representative each from four different grocery store brands with a presence in the State, ~~appointed by the Governor~~ designated by the members of the Workgroup identified in items (1) through (6) of this subsection.

(c) The Workgroup shall elect a chair from among its members.

(d) A member of the Workgroup:

(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Workgroup; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

UNOFFICIAL COPY OF HOUSE BILL 179

(e) The Workgroup shall determine the most cost-effective way to produce a food environment report for each county and each State legislative district in the State.

(f) On or before November 30, 2022, the Workgroup shall report its findings and legislative recommendations to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2022.

HB0179-EHEA-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Natasha Mehu

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 179

March 31st, 2022

TO: Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 179 – Workgroup on Food Environments
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 179.

HB 179 would establish a workgroup to determine and make recommendations regarding the most cost-effective method for producing reports on food environments in each county and state legislative district. The impetus behind the desired workgroup stems from the 2018 Food Environment Briefs, created for each legislative district by the Food Policy and Planning Division of Baltimore City's Department of Planning in partnership with the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF). The legislative briefs were part of the larger effort around *Baltimore City's Food Environment: 2018 Report*.

Food Policy and Planning has collaborated with CLF since 2012 on food environment mapping. This mapping venture has identified areas with concentrated barriers to accessing healthy food. These areas are now referred to as Healthy Food Priority Areas in Baltimore, and colloquially known as "food deserts." In 2018, Food Policy and Planning used the information built into the Citywide map to create legislative district-level maps and briefs. These briefs: provide a demographic breakdown of who lives in Healthy Food Priority Areas; detail the numbers and specifics of food retail, food assistance, and urban agriculture sites; and identify challenges, and opportunities for each district throughout the document.

The maps and briefs can be a starting place for conversations around the food environment and have helped policymakers better understand the food systems in their districts. The suite of Food Environment Maps has helped to inform policy such as the Baltimore City Grocery Store Personal Property Tax Credit, and other efforts like the targeted placement of emergency food distribution sites during the Coronavirus pandemic.

This project is likely to be a major undertaking by the state, especially in considering the nuances between urban and rural food environments, the extent of data collection, and the baseline knowledge of each geography needed to identify challenges and opportunities. Therefore, it is important to study the methodology and resources necessary for the creation of food environment reporting to ensure that the project is executed in the most efficient way possible. Food Policy and Planning can provide guidance and lessons learned to the state agencies on methodology and processes to build from for new food environment mapping efforts.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on House Bill 179.

2022 Moveable Feast HB 179 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 179 – Food Insecurity Zones - State Legislative Districts – Reports

Hearing Date: March 31, 2022

Position: Support

Moveable Feast supports *House Bill 179 – Food Insecurity Zones – State Legislative Districts – Reports*. The bill requires the development of food insecurity zones every two years by the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning.

Moveable Feast provides medically tailored meals to individuals with life threatening illnesses, including cancer and HIV. Many of our clients live in food deserts without access to fresh produce and other healthy foods. Our services provide a lifeline for clients who need special diets to address their clinical conditions.

To improve the overall health of Marylanders, our state needs to take a more planful approach to addressing food insecurity, including the lack of consistent access to healthy food sources. With the reports created under this legislation, each jurisdiction will be able to use the data to plan and implement solutions to address food insecurity in their communities.

Under the bill, State agencies must consult with non-profits that focus on food insecurity issues. Moveable Feast stands ready to support State agencies and other stakeholders in preparing and utilizing the reports to improve the health of Marylanders.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

901 North Milton Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21205 • 410.327.3420 • 410.327.3426 Fax • www.mfeast.org

Moveable

Feast is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization, contributions to which are tax-deductible. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting our accounting office. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.

HB 179_hheidarian_fwa.pdf

Uploaded by: Humon Heidarian

Position: FWA



March 31, 2021
The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
91 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1904

House Bill 179 (Delegate Amprey)
Position: Favorable with Amendments

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

Fair Farms humbly asks for a favorable report with amendments for HB 179. When it comes to the policy-making process, what does not get measured, does not get managed and is therefore ignored. The COVID-19 Pandemic made it clear that communities in our state impacted by food insecurity can no longer be ignored. These issues existed before the pandemic and will continue if not identified and communicated to elected officials and administrators.

We believe that establishing a workgroup is an excellent method of studying food environments. However, it is difficult to tell if the workgroup will be representative of underserved populations, or people living in low-income census tracts or in food deserts. Many institutions, including Johns Hopkins which is part of this workgroup, have already identified such areas in Maryland. Fair Farms urges the committee to consider adding language that would reflect these suggestions. We appreciate including representatives of grocery stores but adding representatives from organizations that serve food insecure people may be valuable as well.

Thank you to Delegate Amprey, his staff, and the stakeholders involved in drafting this bill. Fair Farms greatly appreciates your leadership. We look forward to future opportunities for collaboration on these systemic issues.

Sincerely,

Humon Heidarian
humon@fairfarmsnow.org
Fair Farms Campaign Manager
Waterkeepers Chesapeake