



Maryland Pork Producers Association

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SB 0039 - Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Returning to State Meat Processing Inspection (Farms Buy Local Act)

Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Date: January 25, 2022

MPPA Position: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Pork Producers Association is a grassroots organization of pork producers who sell their product through the local and commercial markets both in state and across the country. MPPA supports Senate Bill 39 - Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Returning to State Meat Processing Inspection (Farms Buy Local Act) which would establish a task force to determine the feasibility of returning to a state meat inspection program.

MPPA believes Senate Bill 0039 would be beneficial to pork producers in the state. The Maryland Pork Producers trusts the current federal USDA inspection process that is in place but with the growing demand for local pork, farmers are having a hard time getting timely slaughter and processing appointments. Starting a slaughter and processing facility is a difficult and costly process. Understanding what processing system would be beneficial to the producer, processor and consumer is something we support.

The state needs more processing capacity for the growing demand, as our producers strive to provide an affordable healthy protein. Having a clear and easy program in place for new business opportunities would be very beneficial.

Currently 27 states have a state meat processing inspection program. If the task force recommends returning to a state program for Maryland, we recommend that the reciprocity of selling meat to other states is considered as well. It is important to our members for the continuation for interstate sales as we are a small state with close borders.

MPPA requests your favorable report on Senate Bill 39.

Sincerely,

Jenell Eck McHenry