



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood

Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Testimony on: SB0121 - Maryland Farms and Families Fund, Maryland Food and Agricultural Resiliency Mechanism Grant Program, and Maryland Farm-To-School Meal Grant Pilot Program – Alterations and Establishment

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 25, 2022

Bill Contact: Senator Katie Hester

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members across all districts in Montgomery County as well as a number of nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports SB0121 because it will help alleviate hunger in our communities while also helping Maryland farmers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the necessity for a strong and resilient food system. We have all experienced food shortages during the past two years, and there is a likelihood that they will get worse. We need solutions that will make our food system more reliable and sustainable, and less dependent on food that has to be shipped. A shift to a more sustainable, localized food system can help strengthen supply chains, build up local farms, and bring equity to consumption and access.

SB0121 will invest in three programs to enhance resiliency and reduce food insecurity:

- Increasing Maryland Market Money, which doubles the value of federal nutrition benefits spent at farmers markets
- Piloting a farm-to-school grant program to increase school purchases of locally grown and produced food, and
- Creating the Maryland Food and Agricultural Resilience Mechanism (MD FARM) to support Maryland-based procurement, harvesting, contracting, distribution, or processing for hunger relief efforts.

This is a strong multi-pronged solution to a real problem that we need to solve quickly. Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0121 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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