

March 29, 2022

**2022 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
HB0178 Public Health – Cottage Food Businesses – Annual Revenues**

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee

POSITION: Testimony of Support of House Bill 178

BILL ANALYSIS: Increases the cap on annual revenue from the sale of food products sold by “cottage food businesses” to \$50,000.

This letter is submitted by Heather Bruskin, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) and Co-Chair of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) in SUPPORT of HB0178. This legislation increases the maximum annual revenue of a “Cottage Food Business.” This bill provides a \$25,000 increase in the annual revenue cap from the sale of cottage food products from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Council, and do not necessarily represent the views of MCFC or the State of Maryland. The Food System Resiliency Council was established by the Maryland General Assembly during the 2021 legislative session to bring together 33 appointed council members from across the state, all with different points of entry and expertise to work toward a more resilient food system and address the food insecurity crisis due to COVID-19. One of the key mandates of this council was to develop a report by Nov. 1st 2021, detailing equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the Maryland food system. The FSRC report represents five months of intensive work and thought leadership on behalf of organizations, such as the state’s main two food banks, all the state’s food councils, leaders in anti-hunger advocacy, emergency food assistance providers, state administrators, emergency responders, food system experts, and universities.

The proposed revenue cap increase in HB0178 aligns with the recommendations in the FSRC report, which details the importance of increasing local food production here in Maryland to build the long-term resilience and sustainability of our local food system. Passing HB0178 will strengthen the sustainability of our local food system by allowing more Cottage Food Business to earn revenue that can offset their costs to produce the cottage food product and allow a sustainable, small-business food production model to thrive in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Heather Bruskin

Co-Chair, Maryland Food System Resiliency Council