



**Statement of Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA)**

To the House Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair: Delegate Kumar Barve

January 20, 2023

House Bill 0008: Counties and State Legislative Districts - Food Environment Reports – Discussion

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the Committee, the Maryland Rural Health Association (MRHA) is in SUPPORT of House Bill 0008: Counties and State Legislative Districts - Food Environment Reports – Discussion

MRHA believes that all Marylanders, including those 1.8 million living in rural Maryland communities deserve access to healthy foods. According to the World Health Organization, “A healthy diet is essential for good health and nutrition. It protects you against many chronic noncommunicable diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Eating a variety of foods and consuming less salt, sugars and saturated and industrially-produced trans-fats, are essential for healthy diet.”

The Food Environment Reports will take information of the equitable access to health food throughout the entire state, including SNAP and WIC recipients. The Food and Environment Reports will provide much needed information to both public and probate agencies to best identify populations and services to improve equitably access and reduce health dipartites across Maryland.

*Sincerely,*

*Jonathan Dayton, MS, NREMT, CNE, Executive Director*

*[jdayton@mdruralhealth.org](mailto:jdayton@mdruralhealth.org)*