

January 30, 2023

Chairman Kumar Barve
Environment and Transportation Committee
Annapolis, Maryland 20401

Chairman Barve,

My name is Michael J. Wilson. I am the Director of Maryland Hunger Solutions. I appear here today on behalf of the **Maryland Food System Resilience Council**, and as Chair of the Communication and Coordination Committee of the Council. This testimony reflects the perspective of the Council, but not necessarily the views of our state agency members 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.

We are strongly in support of HB 32 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. This bill will formally move the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) under MDEM's Office of Resilience. Currently, the FSRC is considered an independent advisory body within the executive branch and assigned to MDEM and the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to provide staffing. MDEM has taken the lead on coordinating the FSRC's efforts over the last two years and has supported the development of two major reports issued by the FSRC. The current FSRC legislation required the Council to consider its organization and structure and make recommendations for adjustments in the 2022 report. After significant consideration and research into how various other statewide food councils were organized, the FSRC determined that MDEM's Office of Resilience was the most appropriate place for the Council to reside long term within state government. The Office's mission aligns well with the FSRC's goals as outlined by law, namely to reduce the impact of current and future disasters on Marylanders by coordinating the statewide effort to build and maintain resilience across hazards.

In conclusion, we urge a favorable report on HB 32, Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. Thank you for your time and attention and I would be glad to respond to any questions.