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Montgomery County

Economic Matters Committee

*Subcommittees*

Public Utilities

Workers' Compensation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 32- MARYLAND FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCY COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 1, 2023

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee and members of the Appropriations Committee,

In 2021, the MGA took action to address the growing food insecurity in Maryland by establishing the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC). HB 831/ SB 723 established the council as a multiagency, collaborative effort that would develop equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of Maryland's food system.

On November 1, 2022, the FSRC issued its mandatory report to the MGA with 27 recommendations for shaping a long-term statewide food landscape that could bolster a local food supply chain and reduce food insecurity in our state. Some of the recommendations are as follows:

- Establish and maintain a statewide food system map to provide a holistic view of existing needs, services, and gaps
- Prepare for, respond to, and recover from food system interruptions large and small
- Ensure the inclusion of diverse voices across the food system landscape
- Review and update local and state emergency management response plans to include non-congregate feeding capabilities
- Conduct an assessment of existing Federal and State food system grants, programs, and resources and analyze gaps in Maryland's participation in the available opportunities

Implementing these, and the other 22, recommendations requires meaningful investment, long-term commitment, and coordination of a number of stakeholders. In order to make sure these recommendations come to fruition, the FSRC must continue its work. By passing this bill, the FSRC will become a permanent entity within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

2 million Marylanders faced hunger in 2021<sup>1</sup>. Compounding factors such as the pandemic and inflation have made family budgets even tighter and their situations more precarious. We must lay the foundation for a more resilient food system now in order to have food on Marylanders' plates in the future.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 32.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Food Bank. "What's at Stake." <https://mdfoodbank.org/hunger-in-maryland/whats-at-stake/>