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**BILL NO.:**           **HB 32**

**TITLE:**               Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

**SPONSOR:**         Delegate Charkoudian

**COMMITTEE:**      Environment and Transportation

**POSITION:**        **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**             February 1, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 32 – Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. This legislation would require the State to produce a report for each county and each State legislative district on the food environment for each county or district.

Despite pandemic recovery efforts, food insecurity has continued to increase due to record inflation and a lack of increasing wages. The prevalence of food deserts across the State of Maryland has only served to compound with affordability challenges. As a result, disadvantaged residents have little opportunity to purchase nutritious foods, particularly without a means to travel to an area with a fresh food supermarket.

House Bill 32 would give County and district leaders a clear map of locations that are in dire need of targeted food desert reduction. Baltimore County has already begun efforts to reduce food insecurity by working with faith-based partners to provide fresh local produce during the pandemic. Baltimore County has also developed healthy food initiatives that address chronic disease and food access. These initiatives are aimed to serve low-income and at-risk communities within the County. These healthy food initiatives incentivize healthy eating options by providing risk-assessments, nutrition education, transportation, and educational material to participants. Baltimore County is working to increase outreach, education, and benefits eligibility awareness for federal benefits like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants and Children program (WIC). Baltimore County is also invested in growing the number of community farmers markets where residents can utilize SNAP and WIC benefits. Baltimore County applauds the State’s partnership in this critical project.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 32. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).