



OPPOSE - HB1083
Food System Resiliency Council - Invasive Species Coalition

Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Environment and Transportation Committee
Hearing Date: 3 MAR 2023

Chairman Kumar Barve
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 20401

Chairman Barve,

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management writes today in opposition to **HB1083 - Food System Resiliency Council - Invasive Species Coalition.**

HB1083 will establish an Invasive Species Coalition under the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, which is currently staffed and supported by MDEM. MDEM understands the importance of a statewide, coordinated effort to control invasive species designed to protect our critical natural resources and economic industries from the threat invasive species pose. We have been engaged in some of the recent informal efforts to collaborate on strategies to combat the impacts of invasive species and we applaud the Delegate's time and advocacy on this issue.

However, MDEM does not believe the Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) is the most effective mechanism for achieving the desired results contemplated by this bill. The FSRC is an advisory group responsible for considering food system policy and making recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor on how to improve production, distribution, and access to food for Marylanders. The FSRC is supported by one full time administrative employee, and the FSRC has no programmatic or operational capabilities or authorities.

HB1083 would require at minimum three additional members to be added to the Council, as the Council does not currently have six individuals with expertise in

invasive species. This would drastically alter the balance of the Council, and likely significantly change its focus from its original legislative intent.

HB1083 also requires the Coalition to:

- Monitor and track the containment levels of invasive species
- Research detection and control measures and eradication methods
- Study and analyze the fiscal impact invasive species have on the seafood industry
- Research blue catfish harvesting
- Develop a comprehensive management and control plan to reduce the spread of invasive species
- Hold public meetings for public comment and education on the issue of combating invasive species in the State

Because the FSRC does not have any programmatic or operational capabilities, these requirements would fall to MDEM to coordinate and implement as the agency assigned to support the FSRC in law. If [HB32/SB124](#) pass, clarifying the FSRC as a formal unit within MDEM within the Office of Resilience, this responsibility will be even more clear. MDEM does not have any subject matter expertise or capabilities related to the requirements above. MDEM is primarily funded by federal grant, none of which would be eligible for use in any of the required activities in this bill.

In summary, while MDEM strongly supports the goal of this legislation, we do not believe the FSRC or MDEM is the appropriate entity for this Coalition. MDEM appreciates the opportunity to share our position with the Committee and **respectfully requests an unfavorable report on HB1083**. If you have any questions, please contact Anna Sierra, MDEM legislative liaison: anna.sierra1@maryland.gov.