

Feb 10, 2023
Maryland General Assembly
House Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairwoman Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

The Plant Based Foods Association (PBFA) and Plant Based Foods Institute (PBFi) encourage this committee to positively recommend this bill: the Prison Health & Wellness Standards Plant-Based Meals Pilot Project - HB0059.

PBFA is the first and only trade association in the U.S. representing the plant-based foods industry. We currently represent over 150 of the nation's leading plant-based food companies. PBFA's mission is to champion, strengthen, and elevate our members and the plant-based foods industry. PBFi is our sister non-profit organization focused on supporting businesses seeking to drive a shift to a plant-based food system.

We commend Maryland General Assembly House Delegate Terri Hill and her colleagues for championing this important effort to serve this marginalized population. The Prison Health & Wellness Standards Plant-Based Meals Pilot Project - HB0059, seeks to bring real change and inclusive policies to Maryland.

This bill aligns with a call to urge Congress to direct federal agencies to make a vegetarian entree available everywhere the federal government serves a meal.

Making a vegetarian or fully plant-based entree available at all corrections facilities can significantly improve public health by making it easier for individuals to choose plant-based meal options. Offering a plant-based entree can reduce risk of food-borne illness and contribute to health and wellness initiatives.

A vegetarian entree is not routinely provided at federal and state facilities, though the Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities recommends that federal facilities "offer protein foods from plants" and defines an entree as "meat" or "meat alternate."

PBFA and PBFi strongly support your efforts to address nutrition, increase healthy eating, and reduce diet-related disease. We urge the Administration to bring the same level of commitment to your efforts to support healthier diets by making a vegetarian or fully plant-based entree available.

Sincerely,



Nicole Negowetti
Vice President of Policy & Food Systems, Plant Based Foods Association
Managing Director, Plant Based Foods Institute