



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 23rd, 2023

HB 584

Income Tax Credit - Food Donations by Qualified Farms - Extension (Farmers Feeding Families Act)

House Ways & Means Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 584 extends a tax credit against the State income tax for fresh farm and organic fresh farm food donations; altering the amounts of the tax credit from 75% to 100% of the value of the donated certified organic produce a qualified farm is eligible to receive under certain circumstances.

The Conference historically and routinely supports legislation aimed at addressing food insecurity and other such poverty ailments among vulnerable and often marginalized populations in the state. As Pope Francis stresses in his message on World Food Day 2021 *"Our actions are our future. Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life"*, *underlines the need for concerted action to ensure that everyone has access to diets that ensure maximum environmental sustainability, and that are both adequate and affordable. Each of us has a role to play in transforming food systems for the benefit of people and the planet, and "all of us can cooperate [...] for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents" (Encyclical Laudato Si', 14).* ". Thus, House Bill 584 seeks to build a more just framework that puts poor and hungry people first, serves small and moderate-sized family farms, promotes sustainable stewardship of the land and helps vulnerable farmers and rural communities.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a **favorable** report for House Bill 584.