



2/5/2024

Re: Support of SB 0098 – Department of Housing and Community Development – Food Desert Study

Dear Honorable Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Community Action Partnership (MCAP) to urge your support of SB 0098 – Department of Housing and Community Development Food Desert Study.

The Maryland Community Action Partnership (MCAP) is a statewide non-profit organization comprised of Maryland's 17 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which collectively serve every Maryland county. Together, we work toward eradicating homelessness and poverty to realize our vision of ensuring that all Maryland individuals and families are stable, economically secure, and live in safe and thriving communities.

As significant providers of food and nutrition services for Marylanders with low-incomes, the MCAP network of CAAs supports SB 0098 because of its impact on the individuals and families that our network serves.

If passed, the bill would:

- Require the Department of Housing and Community Development to study food deserts in the state and make recommendations to reduce the number of food deserts.
- Determine the impact of food deserts on the local population and economy.

It is MCAP's position that this legislation will facilitate the collection and analysis of critically important information about the existence and impact of food deserts in Maryland. This data will better equip state and local agencies, private non-profit organizations, and community partners to address the persistent issue of food insecurity for Marylanders with low-income. The importance of studying and addressing the root causes of inadequate access to food cannot be overstated, as access to nutritious food is an essential step on the pathway to stability and economic security in all Maryland communities.

If there is any additional information that I can provide for you as you consider this bill, I would be happy to help. You can contact me at amartin@maryland-cap.org, or by calling 205-757-0764.

Sincerely,

Angela Martin

Angela Martin, Executive Director