

**SB177\_RMC\_Support Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Charlotte Davis

Position: FAV



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*Susan O'Neill, Chair*

*Charlotte Davis, Executive Director*

Testimony in Support of  
SENATE BILL 177 - PROCUREMENT - STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - CONTROL  
AUTHORITY - LOCAL FOOD PURCHASING  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
January 22, 2025

The Rural Maryland Council **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 177 – Procurement – State Department of Education – Control Authority – Local Food Purchasing. This bill gives the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) the authority to control procurement of food by local school systems without the approval of any other primary procurement unit. It further (1) requires MSDE, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), to establish a platform to facilitate procurement of food by local school systems; (2) exempts procurements by MSDE for the purpose of master contracts from oversight by the Board of Public Works (BPW); and (3) requires MSDE to report annually on such procurements.

Passage of this bill will ease regulatory burdens in local food procurement making it easier for farmers to access institutional markets. It further supports the Certified Local Farm and Fish Program, created in 2020 to encourage state agencies to buy food from local farms. The program's goal is for state agencies to buy 20% of their food from certified local farms.

According to the USDA Farm to school census, Maryland hosts 1,457 schools and 895,078 students. <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/census-results/states/md>. In 2024, Maryland schools spent over \$19 million on paid school lunches and \$8.3 million on paid breakfasts. Maryland spent \$72.3 million on Free Breakfasts and \$206 million on Free Lunches for a total of \$305 million in annual spending on food each year. Capturing 20% of that spending would result in \$61 million for local food procurements. ([https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2023/2023\\_177-178.pdf#:~:text=The%20Maryland%20State%20Department%20of%20Education%20\(MSDE\),maximum%20reimbursement%20rates%20for%20the%20school%20meals](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2023/2023_177-178.pdf#:~:text=The%20Maryland%20State%20Department%20of%20Education%20(MSDE),maximum%20reimbursement%20rates%20for%20the%20school%20meals))

Increased local food procurement will help improve farm profitability and supports the rural economy.

The Rural Maryland Council has supported the Certified Local Farm and Fish and the Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Programs. The Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Program addresses the highly invasive blue catfish which has the potential to cause substantial harm to the Chesapeake Bay food web as it has a long lifespan and an expansive diet, which can include many native species that call the Bay their home such as menhaden and blue crabs.

The Rural Maryland Council supports and encourages efforts to promote local food production and farmer profitability. The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of Senate Bill 177.

*The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.*

**“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”**

# **20250120 Capital Area Food Bank Testimony for SB01**

Uploaded by: Joseph Liu

Position: FAV

January 20, 2025

To the Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

Please vote for Senator Hester's SB0177/HB0056 Procurement – State Department of Education – Control Authority – Local Food Purchasing bill which would help local school districts serve healthy, Maryland-grown and produced fruit, vegetables, proteins, and milk. By giving the Maryland State Department of Education authority to contract with local farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors, and other local food business, the legislation could greatly enhance local food-source procurement for school meals, especially in smaller school districts with fewer staff and resources. Since school meals account for three-fourths of children's daily nutritional requirements, more fresh, local foods will support healthier children better ready to learn. The legislation would be a win for Maryland's children, schools, producers, and economy.

The Capital Area Food Bank is the anchor of the hunger relief infrastructure in the capital region, providing more than 60 million meals to people in communities across Prince George's and Montgomery County, Maryland, as well as in the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. We work with a network of nearly 200 other community-based organizations in Maryland to put food resources in the hands of our neighbors in need.

We know that good food today will help make brighter futures for Maryland's children tomorrow. Despite our efforts, there are still 61,000 children in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties who are food insecure, according to our latest Hunger Report survey. In Prince George's, 16% of children or 34,000 lack food security. Montgomery County is home to 27,000 food insecure children or 11% of children in the county. That is why it is so important to do everything we can to empower local school districts in their efforts to enhance the freshness and quality of school meals.

The Capital Area Food Bank, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, has been able to distribute Maryland-produced foods to our neighbors through the Local Food Purchase Agreement Program. The demand for local milk, fruit, and vegetables from our neighbors is tremendous. They have also benefitted by our access to blue catfish harvested from the Chesapeake Bay. Not only is this food resource a highly-desired, nutritious, and tasty source of protein, it also provides important environmental benefits by reducing the population of an unwanted invasive species.

SB0177/HB0056 would benefit local school districts in the same way that the Capital Area Food Bank has benefitted from the LFPA Program. It would be easier for school districts to procure locally-sourced Maryland foods and serve them to school children for breakfast, lunch, after school, and summer meals. Furthermore, farm to school programs create educational opportunities for our children and youth to learn about where our food comes from, visit food producers, and expand their horizons. And experience has shown that children are more enthusiastic about consuming nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables

when it is part of their curriculum. For Maryland food producers, the legislation could improve access to an institutional market worth millions of dollars. And Maryland communities would win because buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and enhances the local economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Joseph Liu, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy  
Capital Area Food Bank  
4900 Puerto Rico Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20017

# Testimony.SB177\_Sen Hester.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

**KATIE FRY HESTER**  
*Legislative District 9*  
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Education, Energy, and  
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on  
Cybersecurity, Information Technology  
and Biotechnology



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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

**Testimony in Support of SB 177- Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing**

January 20, 2025

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of SB 177 - Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing, which will simplify the food procurement processes to make it easier for small farmers to get their products purchased by schools.

Farm to School programs help students, small farmers, and the community. Students get to eat fresh, healthy local foods. Small farmers gain access to bigger and more stable financial opportunities by selling to schools. The community benefits by having healthier children, more job opportunities, and a stronger local economy.<sup>1</sup>

However, complicated procurement processes make it difficult for many small farmers to get their products purchased by schools. Currently they must engage separately with multiple school systems.

This bill:

- Allows the Maryland State Department of Education to create “master contracts” with local farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors, and other local food businesses. Local school systems can then purchase from these master contracts, making it easier for small businesses to engage in procurement with several local school systems.
- Includes Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species, with the goal of increasing Blue Catfish in school meals and decreasing the presence of this invasive (but nutritious) species from the Chesapeake Bay.

This bill represents a rare opportunity to meet multiple critical goals with one swift action. By streamlining procurement, we empower our local farmers, fishers, and food enterprises, bolstering our economy and supporting sustainable agriculture. By prioritizing fresh, locally sourced foods, we enhance the health and well-being of our students. And by addressing the invasive Blue Catfish, we protect the Chesapeake Bay while providing a healthy addition to school meals. It is a win for our economy, our environment, and our children’s education. For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 177.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Katie Fry Hester'.

Senator Katie Fry Hester  
Howard and Montgomery Counties

<sup>1</sup><https://www.farmtoschool.org/>

# **Support AHA SB 177 School Food Procurement.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laura Hale

Position: FAV





January 20, 2025

Testimony of Laura Hale

American Heart Association

**Favorable SB 177 Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing**

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Honorable Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today. The American Heart Association extends its strong support for SB 177 Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

For children to succeed in school, it is essential that they have a healthy lunch and a healthy breakfast. A hungry child cannot learn. Children cannot succeed without proper nutrition, and we know that for most children they receive up to half of their daily calories from school meals<sup>1</sup>. School Nutrition Directors work hard to create balanced meals for our children and this legislation will help to make that easier. By simplifying the processing for school food procurement more dollars will be invested in Maryland farmers to feed Maryland's children.

This legislation also works to address invasive species in the bay which has been a highly successfully pilot program in Caroline County. The children love the catfish that is served (and healthy) and is helping to cut down on this invasive species in the bay.

The legislation will help schools get more locally grown healthy food into school meals. The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 177.

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<sup>1</sup> [School Nutrition Environment | Healthy Schools | CDC](#)

**SB 177 - CBF - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **Senate Bill 177**

### **Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing**

**Date:** January 22, 2025

**To:** Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

**Position:** **Favorable**

**From:** Matt Stegman,  
Maryland Staff Attorney

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 177 which will permit the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop “master contracts” for the procurement of locally-produced and harvested food. Local school districts will then be able to purchase through these master contracts. This approach will make it easier for small farmers, fishers, and other food producers to navigate complex state and local procurement regulations and provide fresher, more nutritious meals to students.

Many small farming operations are at the forefront of implementing regenerative agricultural practices that improve soil health and increase food and water quality. Regenerative agriculture is also key to addressing many issues we face regarding climate change, from reducing greenhouse gases to mitigating flooding caused by more intense storms. Climate-friendly practices, like those practiced at CBF’s Clagett Farm, help us produce food in ways that increase resilience and work with natural systems. Providing smaller operations access to more stable financial opportunities is not just a win for those businesses, schools, and students, but potentially for our soil and waterways as well.

Finally, the bill specifically allows for the procurement of Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species. This will aid in the State’s efforts to combat invasive – and delicious – species like the blue catfish by providing an increased market demand for the fish. Reducing blue catfish populations will support the health of key aquatic species they prey on, most notably menhaden and blue crabs.

**CBF urges the Committee’s FAVORABLE report on SB 177.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

# **SB 177\_Horizon Foundation\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nikki Highsmith Vernick

Position: FAV



January 22, 2025

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**BILL:** SB 177 – Procurement – State Department of Education – Control Authority – Local Food Purchasing

**POSITION:** Support

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives.

**The Foundation is pleased to support SB 177 – Procurement – State Department of Education – Control Authority – Local Food Purchasing.**

This bill would enable the Department of Education to procure locally grown food for schools and encourage farmers to engage with local school systems to sell their products.

The Foundation is a lead member of the Healthier Choices Coalition, a group of Howard County civic, faith and health organizations and individuals working to create policy change that will make healthier food and drinks more widely available, accessible and affordable for everyone in Howard County. Members have been working with the Howard County Public School System for the last year to improve school meals. One of these ongoing initiatives is to implement a farm-to-table program that would incorporate more locally grown produce into school menus. This bill would help facilitate that effort and make it easier for the school system to engage with local farmers and provide fresh, healthy produce for students during the school day.

Like many communities across the state, food insecurity has increased in recent years in Howard County, particularly for lower- and middle-income families. For many students, school meals are their primary source of daily calories and nutrition. Ensuring that school meals are healthy and include fresh, locally grown produce will better enable these students to thrive inside and outside of the classroom.

Healthy food should be accessible to everyone in our community. For this reason, the Horizon Foundation **SUPPORTS SB 177** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for your consideration.

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# **SB 177 Testimony MARBIDCO.pdf**

Uploaded by: Steve McHenry

Position: FAV



**MARBIDCO**  
growing rural ventures™

MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE-BASED  
INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
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Mary Shank Creek, *Chair* / Stephen R. McHenry, *Executive Director*

## TESTIMONY STATEMENT

**BILL:** Senate Bill 177 (Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing)

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget and Taxation

**DATE:** January 22, 2025

**POSITION:** Support

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The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) supports Senate Bill 177, which will give the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) the authority to engage in or control procurement of food by local school systems without the approval of any other primary procurement unit. It further requires MSDE, in consultation with MDA, to establish a platform to facilitate procurement of food by local school systems, and exempts procurements by MSDE for the purpose of master contracts from oversight by the Board of Public Works.

Farm to School programs serve to benefit students (with access to healthy sources of fresh and locally produced nutrition), small farmers (through enhanced market development and produce sales), and the community (with both locally derived economic activity and more potential access to healthy foods). Complicated procurement processes make it difficult for many small farmers to get their products purchased by schools. Currently they must engage separately with multiple, individual school systems.

For additional background, in 2020, the General Assembly established the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program (under MDA) and the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund (under MARBIDCO). The legislation established a 20% procurement goal for Maryland State agencies and institutions to purchase locally grown food from certified local farm enterprises. Many institutional and wholesale buyers that want to purchase locally sourced food find it difficult in contracting with small farmers to meet their supply sourcing needs

For this reason, the 2020 bill and related legislation also established a five-year program of funding (totaling about \$2 million) for MARBIDCO to be able to offer Certified Local Farm and Fish Food Aggregation grants to help support the development of a local food aggregation infrastructure in Maryland to help meet current and future wholesale and institutional market demand for locally produced food products. This program has provided funding to farm aggregators to help with the construction of processing and storage facilities and the purchase of capital equipment.

Farmer marketing associations and cooperatives as well as local governments have been able to access these funds. This grant program is scheduled to end in FY 2025.

The establishment or expansion of farm food aggregators helps provide a link between the small farmer and the larger-scale buyer that is looking to purchase locally grown food. It has long been hoped that local school systems would eventually become purchasers of locally produced foods too. Caroline County Public Schools has truly led the way in Maryland (before the MARBIDCO grant program was even created), and more recently Frederick County Schools began purchasing local farm foods from an aggregator that MARBIDCO has funded. We are hopeful that additional county school systems will be able to access more local farm food because of the passage of this legislation.

In closing, MARBIDCO believes that this legislation will clearly serve to benefit students (with better access to healthy local food products) as well as small farmers (with a sustainable new market), **As such, MARBIDCO respectfully requests a Favorable Report for Senate Bill 177.**

*MARBIDCO Contact: Steve McHenry, 410.267.6807*

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*MARBIDCO was established 18 years ago by the Maryland General Assembly to help enhance the sustainability and profitability of the State's agricultural and resource-based industries in order to help bolster rural economies, support locally grown and processed food and fiber products, and preserve working farm and forest land. MARBIDCO is a nimble, quasi-governmental financial intermediary organization that has a mission to serve exclusively the commercial farming, forestry, and seafood industries of Maryland. Young and beginning farmers are a special focus for MARBIDCO, as is farm operation diversification. In delivering its financing programs, MARBIDCO works cooperatively with commercial banks and farm credit associations, as well as a host of federal, State, regional, and local government agencies, and universities. Since 2007, MARBIDCO has approved some 1,410 financings totaling more than \$111 million for food and fiber business projects located in all Maryland's counties – and in the process has leveraged more than \$236.1 million in commercial lender financing. For more information about MARBIDCO's programs, please visit: [www.marbidco.org](http://www.marbidco.org)*



# **MDFB - Support - SB177 Procurement - State Departm**

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035  
410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**To:** Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE:** **Support of SB0177 - Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing**

On behalf of the nearly 8,500 Farm Bureau families in Maryland, I am writing in support of SB0177, which seeks to strengthen Farm to School programs across Maryland by improving procurement processes and fostering connections between local farmers, school systems, and the community.

Farm to School programs have proven to be transformative for students, small farmers, and local communities. These programs enable students to gain access to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced foods, which supports their academic success and long-term health. Small farmers benefit from new, stable financial opportunities by selling directly to schools, which helps sustain their businesses and livelihoods. Meanwhile, communities experience positive impacts, including healthier children, increased job opportunities, and a stronger, more resilient local economy.

However, the current procurement processes create significant barriers for small farmers and food producers. Many are unable to participate fully due to the complexity of engaging individually with multiple school systems. This bill addresses these challenges by allowing the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to establish “master contracts” with local farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors, and other local food businesses. These contracts streamline procurement processes, enabling school systems to purchase easily from these agreements while creating more opportunities for small and local producers. Additionally, the bill includes Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species in the procurement scope, with a specific focus on Blue Catfish. This initiative will not only introduce a nutritious food source into school

meals but also contribute to reducing the presence of this invasive species in the Chesapeake Bay, thereby supporting environmental sustainability.

By supporting this legislation, Maryland will enhance the effectiveness of Farm to School programs, provide critical support to small businesses, and promote healthier and more sustainable communities.

**Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB0177**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough", is positioned below a horizontal line. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Tyler Hough  
Director of Government Relations

*Please contact Tyler Hough at [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org) with any questions*

**SB 177 - State Board - SWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carey Wright

Position: FWA

**TO:** Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**BILL:** Senate Bill 177- Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food

**DATE:** January 19, 2025

**POSITION:** Support with Amendments

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The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports **Senate Bill (SB) 177- Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food** with amendments. The bill authorizes the State Department of Education to engage in or control procurements of certain food. This includes food grown within a 200-mile radius from an elementary or secondary school, food grown at a certified local farm, and food provided by a certified Chesapeake invasive species provider. A local school system will enter into a master contract with the Department to procure food which meets these definitions.

MSDE supports this bill with the request for an amendment to the language on page 2, line 10 and page 4 line 12 to state: “(6) THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF ANY OTHER PRIMARY PROCUREMENT UNIT, ***WHEN FUNDING AND RESOURCES BECOMES AVAILABLE***, MAY ENGAGE IN OR CONTROL PROCUREMENT OF...”

**SB 177** empowers MSDE to initiate master agreements with local agricultural producers, enhancing its efforts to streamline and increase the procurement of local foods for school meals. The MSDE Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (OSCNP) administers the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) child nutrition programs (e.g., school breakfast and lunch, etc.) including, Farm to School (F2S). F2S fosters the inclusion of local foods in school meals and supports local agricultural supply chains by creating new market opportunities for producers. With the federal investment in F2S since the Covid-19 pandemic, MSDE has considerably grown its F2S programming.

Although local education agencies (LEAs) have participated in the [USDA’s Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program](#) and the procurement of local foods since its inception in 2010, the 2023 Farm to School Census conducted by the USDA ([2023 Farm to School National and State Data Workbook](#)) documents that local food procurement is only a small percentage of food expenditures made by participants in the various child nutrition programs. To illustrate, the procurement of local produce, meat, and poultry only accounts for 3.8% of total food purchases by LEAs in Maryland (a decline from the last Census in 2019, when it was 8%). While 11% of their food expenditures go for local milk. Though the respondents include a mix of Maryland public and private schools, residential care institutions and child and adult care institutions participating across the nutrition programs, the county school districts are by far the largest purchasers of milk and other food items included in these programs.

The Census and a 2023 Farm to School [sustainability study](#) conducted by OSCNP provide some insight as to the reasons local food procurement is not yet optimized in Maryland. Among the challenges is the perception that the availability of local food is limited, and that there is even less availability of precut/processed local foods. Also noted are the difficulty finding local producers, suppliers, and distributors; few local producers are bidding on

school solicitations; school/district payment procedures do not align with farmers' needs; delivery challenges; and the higher cost associated with local food. Additionally, there has not been a clear definition of "local." School buyers may identify the fresh produce distributed through the federal government and broadline or produce distributors as "local," although these school supply chains are not required to provide "locally sourced" and more often provide regionally.

Currently, OSCNP is developing an automated system, funded by the USDA, to source, order, and fulfill local food deliveries to schools. Known as the Local Food Exchange (LFE), the system was envisioned to address some of the barriers identified by LEAs and local producers for procuring local food in the quantities needed for inclusion in school meals. LFE is expected to ease the identification and sourcing of local producers, processors, and other local food businesses through an extensive database. Those included in the database will be procured under the master contract proposed in **SB 177**. Utilization of a master contract will facilitate simultaneous procurement for several LEAs in a single state bid, easing the burden for producers of responding to multiple, individual solicitations. It also provides them with access to larger contracts, and clients that they might not have otherwise had the opportunity to engage. Local aggregation will also be easier to facilitate when multiple producers are included in a single agreement.

**SB 177** also supports LFE's "one-stop shop" process for LEAs, potentially reducing costs and administrative burdens. While saving them time and effort, master contracting will also increase the consistency of their local food procurement. Furthermore, buyers and suppliers under the master contract will have access to a feature in LFE to coordinate forward contracting. This can moderate the discrepancy between when school is in session and the growing season, allowing LEAs and producers to align menu and crop planning more effectively. This level of coordination in the state would be more difficult to achieve without a technology system and a database of state procured suppliers.

Through its federal funding, partnerships with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Future Harvest, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and others, MSDE is dedicated to increased procurement of local foods in school meals. MSDE OSCNP will continue to promote and devise strategies for local food procurement, including support for more local distribution chains that can provide processed local foods, storage, and deliveries to schools throughout the state. The proposed legislation not only supports these goals, but it also provides a definition for the procurement of local food in Maryland schools and enables a permanent pathway for MSDE to ensure and manage the cornerstone of federal F2S programming. Moreover, **SB 177** complements the State mandate for 20% local procurement among state agencies, aligns with USDA requirements to "buy American," and the USDA's expanded provisions for local geographic preference in contracting.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 177**. Please contact Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D. ([akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov](mailto:akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov)), MSDE Executive Director of the Office of Government Affairs, or Zachary Hands ([zachary.hands1@maryland.gov](mailto:zachary.hands1@maryland.gov)) the Executive Director of the State Board of Education, for any additional information.

**DGS**

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FWA

***SB 177- Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority -  
Local Food Purchasing***

**Position:** Support with Amendments

**Committee:** Budget and Taxation

**Date:** January 22, 2025

**From:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) supports SB 177 with amendments intended to achieve the legislative intent of this meaningful initiative. DGS supports the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) establishing and administering a program to connect local public school systems with local farms and fisheries to provide local food products to students. DGS is currently working with both MSDE and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) on efforts to establish such a program.

In support of this legislation, DGS is working collaboratively with the bill sponsors, along with our sister agencies to develop amendments.

For the reasons detailed above, DGS requests a favorable report on SB 177 with amendments.

**Contact:** John R. Woolums, Esq., Director of Government and Legislative Affairs,  
(410) 260-2908 (O), (667) 434-0008 (M), [john.woolums@maryland.gov](mailto:john.woolums@maryland.gov)