

LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
Legislative District 20
Montgomery County

Economic Matters Committee

Subcommittees

Public Utilities

Chair, Unemployment Insurance



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 9- PUBLIC SAFETY - FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCY COUNCIL - DEFINITIONS AND REPORTS

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
MARCH 25TH, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Maryland's Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) is a formally appointed body that meets regularly to coordinate efforts across several state agencies, non-profits, and grassroots organizations. It is dedicated to increasing the resiliency and sustainability of Maryland's food system, addressing equity and food insecurity issues, and expanding the impact of existing food council stakeholder organizations.

To be consistent with federal definitions, the FSRC has requested this bill to make the following language changes.

This bill will:

- Add a requirement that FSRC engage in ongoing policy recommendations to improve the equity and sustainability of the food system in Maryland.
- Replace "food waste" with "wasted food," citing the Environmental Protection Agency's definition: "Wasted food is an overarching term to describe food that was not used for its intended purpose and is managed in a variety of ways, such as donation to feed people, creation of animal feed, composting, anaerobic digestion, or disposal in landfills or combustion facilities."¹
- Replace "food deserts" with "healthy food priority areas," a term used by several of FSRC's partner organizations to refer to areas with limited access to healthy foods. This is in line with the United States Department of Agriculture, which has also stopped using the term food desert.²

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 9.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/sustainable-management-food-basics>

² <https://gisportal.ers.usda.gov/portal/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=a53ebd7396cd4ac3a3ed09137676fd40>