



## House Bill 1434

### *Food Deserts Workgroup - Establishment*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation  
Committee

Date: March 4, 2025

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1434. This bill establishes the Food Deserts Workgroup to study and recommend solutions to eliminate food deserts across the state. The Workgroup's findings and recommendations will be critical in identifying strategies to ensure all Marylanders have reasonable local access to fresh and healthy food.

According to the Maryland Food Bank, one in three Marylanders faces food insecurity. While food deserts manifest differently in urban, suburban, and rural counties, their impact on public health remains significant, contributing to poor nutrition, higher rates of chronic disease, and economic hardship.

Creating this Workgroup ensures a coordinated, statewide approach, bringing together policymakers, stakeholders, and local leaders to develop meaningful, actionable solutions. MACo supports the inclusion of three county representatives in the Workgroup, ensuring a diverse perspective that reflects the unique needs of jurisdictions across Maryland. Counties play a pivotal role in land use, economic development, and public health efforts that intersect with food access, making their participation essential to crafting effective solutions.

By bringing together state and local leaders to comprehensively address food insecurity, HB 1434 represents a meaningful step toward eliminating food deserts and improving health outcomes for Maryland residents.

For these reasons, MACo respectfully urges the Committee to give HB 1434 a **FAVORABLE** report.