

JOHNNY RAY SALLING
Legislative District 6
Baltimore County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 321
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3587 • 301-858-3587
800-492-7122 Ext. 3587
JohnnyRay.Salling@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 6, 2025

Finance Committee
Senator Pamela Beidle
Senator Katherine Klausmeier
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

To the Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you to the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee to allow me to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 353.

Food deserts have begun to increase in our State. Recently, a grocery store in a central community in Baltimore County closed, which concerned many residents.

As you can see, I requested an amendment that changes the entirety of the bill. The amendment requires the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council to identify areas where residents have limited access to affordable and nutritious food, identify the health and public safety risks residents face due to living in food desert areas, and help promote social equity by addressing disparities in access to healthy food options. They will assess potential economic opportunities, such as the potential for new businesses, and the use of existing financial incentives for grocery stores and supermarket retailers to move into these areas.

Throughout the interim, I worked tirelessly meeting with various stakeholders. They are heavily invested in forming a work group comprised of many State departments and local non-profits. They have extensive knowledge and years of experience in researching the substantial impacts food deserts have on our diverse communities throughout the State.

I respectfully request that the Committee and the Food System Resiliency Council take this into consideration and welcome these stakeholders into the conversation so our communities may benefit from the information and guidance they can provide.

Thank you for allowing me to speak here today and I would ask for a favorable report on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Johnny R. Salling".

Senator Johnny Ray Salling