

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 56- PROCUREMENT - STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - CONTROL AUTHORITY - LOCAL FOOD PURCHASING ELECTRIC COMPANIES - REGIONAL TRANSMISSION ORGANIZATIONS

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN  
FEBRUARY 4, 2025

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

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>

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.

This bill will:

- Allow 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.
- The bill also specifically 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.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 56.

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