



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 936 - MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT MC 7-26

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
APRIL 1, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of Education, Energy, and the Environment 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.¹ The State of Maryland created the Certified Local Farm and Fish Program to encourage state agencies, including public four-year universities, to achieve an overall goal of purchasing 20% of their food from Certified Local Farm and Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Directory. A certified local farm is a farm that has a nutrient management plan or meets the Maryland nutrient management requirements. This includes all Maryland farms and farms in nearby states that farm according to Maryland's environmental standards. A Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species includes invasive species that have been captured in the Chesapeake Bay.² This includes blue catfish, which are invasive but very nutritious. Serving them in meals provides quality protein and helps protect the Bay.

Montgomery County Public Schools, parents, students, and community members have long discussed the value of increasing locally grown food in school meals. This bill will support moving MCPS towards an increase in these local foods by publicising information on how MCPS is currently spending money on local food and requiring that they establish goals to increase this spending. This will support continued engagement by farmers and community members to meet the goals.

This bill will:

- Require the Montgomery County public school system to identify the dollar amounts of food procured for school meals in the 2026-2027 school year from certified local farms and certified Chesapeake invasive species providers, as well as publish this information on the school system's website.
- Require that the Montgomery County public school system set target increases for the dollar amount of food procured from certified local farms and certified Chesapeake invasive species providers for the 2028-2029, 2030-2031, 2031-2032, 2033-2034, and 2036-2037 school years using the data identified as a baseline.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 936.

¹<https://www.farmtoschool.org/>

²https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/pages/certified-local-farm.aspx