

ARTHUR ELLIS, CPA
Legislative District 28
Charles County

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER

Finance Committee

Vice Chair, Rules Committee

Senate Chair

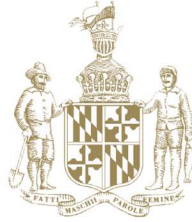
Joint Committee on the
Management of Public Funds

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on
Workers' Compensation Benefit and
Insurance Oversight

Senate Chair, Charles County Delegation

Chair, Select Committee Southern
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Sponsor Written Testimony: Favorable

Senate Bill 570: Public Health - Baby Food Testing - Definition of Baby Food

February 23, 2026

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and fellow colleagues of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 570, which would redefine “baby food,” require laboratory testing of such products, and make publicly available the results of such products to inform the decision-making process for families when feeding their infant.

In 2019, a nonprofit organization, Healthy Babies Bright Futures, conducted an independent study on baby food products. Their research determined that there was at least one toxic element found in 95 percent of tested products. In 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives, Oversight and Reform Committee reported that the toxic elements arsenic, lead, cadmium, and mercury were found in baby food products, in levels over the allowable amount determined by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.¹ These toxic elements are especially harmful to infants and young children, as toxic elements can modify a developing brain and have been linked to problems with learning, cognition, and behavior.

The redesignation of baby food to include infant formulas and infant cereal is imperative as baby cereal containing grains and rice, are likely to contain toxic elements. As a well-known

¹ Bair E. C. (2022). A Narrative Review of Toxic Heavy Metal Content of Infant and Toddler Foods and Evaluation of United States Policy. *Frontiers in nutrition*, 9, 919913. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2022.919913>

ingredient of cereal, cereal containing rice is commonly used after an infant is weaned from breast milk/ formula feeding. Given their high food intake compared to their low body weight, infants and young children are more vulnerable to toxic elements found in food compared to adults.

The bill also requires proficient laboratories to assess baby food products and produce the results to consumers. Baby food product manufacturers must package such products with a QR code or machine-readable code that consumers can readily access with the results of baby food products containing toxic elements. Manufacturers must also provide a link to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration webpage that details the risks associated with consuming toxic elements found in foods during infancy and young childhood.

This is a severe problem, affecting Maryland families and the growth and development of infants and young children. Maryland has a crucial role to play in securing the future of our children. Senate Bill 570 will ensure that Maryland families are provided with transparency around toxic elements found in infant formulas and infant cereals so that they are able to make informed decisions.

I request a favorable report on Senate Bill 570. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arthur Ellis".

Arthur Ellis, CPA