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Opposition Testimony on HB 1023  
House Health Committee  
March 3, 2026

Chair Bangall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tim Carey and I am a policy attorney at The Good Food Institute, a nonprofit think tank helping build a more innovative and secure food system. As a lifelong Maryland resident deeply invested in the flourishing of our state economy, environment, and communities, I urge you to oppose HB 1023.

### **A Ban is Unnecessary Because Cultivated Meat Already Undergoes Robust Federal Oversight**

HB 1023 would impose an unnecessary ban on the sale, offering for sale, distribution, and manufacture of cultivated meat. Cultivated meat (also referred to as “cell-cultured” or erroneously as “lab-grown,” since it is not produced in a lab) is real meat produced from animal cells, grown under controlled conditions, and then processed and labeled under existing food safety guidelines.<sup>1</sup> Though still a novel food, there are already regulatory guidelines to ensure the safety of cultivated meat products. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Department of Agriculture reached a formal agreement on the oversight of cultivated meat seven years ago.<sup>2</sup> To date, five products have cleared the entire regulatory process for human consumption.<sup>3</sup> There is no credible risk to public health from consuming approved cultivated meat products. In truth, adopting cultivated meat may improve public health, as well as the environmental and economic health of Maryland.

### **Banning Cultivated Meat Limits Maryland’s Ability to Lead in Public Health and Environmental Innovation and Defies Free Market Principles**

A state ban on cultivated meat would harm, instead of protect, public health. Research has shown that the adoption of cultivated meat into global food systems is projected to use significantly less land and

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<sup>1</sup> Swartz, E., & Bomkamp, C. (2025). *The Science of Cultivated Meat*. GFI.  
<https://gfi.org/science/the-science-of-cultivated-meat/>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration & Department of Agriculture. (2019, March 7). *Formal Agreement Between FDA and USDA Regarding Oversight of Human Food Produced Using Animal Cell Technology Derived from Cell Lines of USDA-amenable Species*. FDA.  
<https://www.fda.gov/food/human-food-made-cultured-animal-cells/formal-agreement-between-fda-and-usda-regarding-oversight-human-food-produced-using-animal-cell>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2025, March 7). *Inventory of Completed Pre-market Consultations for Human Food Made with Cultured Animal Cells*. FDA.  
<https://www.fda.gov/food/human-food-made-cultured-animal-cells/inventory-completed-pre-market-consultations-human-food-made-cultured-animal-cells>.

produce significantly fewer greenhouse gas emissions than conventional meat.<sup>4,5,6</sup> For example, if only 11% of the protein food market incorporated novel sources of protein like cultivated meat by 2035, greenhouse gas emissions could reduce on a scale roughly equivalent to decarbonizing the entire aviation or shipping industry.<sup>7</sup> Cultivated meat can also reduce the risk of antibiotic resistant illnesses. To date, about 70% of medically important antibiotics are used in conventional animal agriculture, many of which are also used by humans.<sup>8</sup> According to the Center for Disease Control, antimicrobial-resistant infections impact over 2.8 million Americans a year, over 35,000 of which result in death.<sup>9</sup> By reducing the usage of human-grade antibiotics in our food supply, we can also reduce the risk of disease.

Banning cultivated meat is antithetical to Maryland's investments in an innovative bioeconomy. Maryland is home to a potent mix of federal research institutions, leading universities, and more than 1,800 life sciences companies that have flourished under state programs supporting research and development, commercialization, and workforce development.<sup>10</sup> As a recent example, Maryland-based F3 Tech partnered with the Maryland Department of Commerce to propose a \$40 million multi-user biomanufacturing facility under the federal BioMADE program to increase Maryland's biomanufacturing capacity.<sup>11</sup> Novel food products like cultivated meat are ideal candidates for such a facility, presenting a promising opportunity for Maryland to develop quality jobs and expand its local bioeconomy.

Banning cultivated meat also violates free market principles. It is not the state's place to tell consumers what they can and can't purchase, as long as the products don't pose meaningful risks to public welfare. If people don't want cultivated meat, they can simply not buy it. Federal regulations already require that cultivated meat products be clearly and accurately labeled.<sup>12</sup> There's little risk that consumers would

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<sup>4</sup> Sinke, P., Odegard, I., Giesen, C., Swartz, E., & Sanctorum, H. (2023). *Ex-ante life cycle assessment of commercial-scale cultivated meat production in 2030*. CE Delft.

<https://cedelft.eu/publications/rapport-lca-of-cultivated-meat-future-projections-for-different-scenarios/>.

<sup>5</sup> Sinke, P., & Odegard, I. (2021). *LCA of cultivated meat: Future projections for different scenarios*. CE Delft.

[https://gfi-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CE\\_Delft\\_190107\\_LCA\\_of\\_cultivated\\_meat\\_Def.pdf](https://gfi-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CE_Delft_190107_LCA_of_cultivated_meat_Def.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Tuomisto, H. L., & Teixeira de Mattos, M. J. (2011). *Environmental impacts of cultured meat production*.

*Environmental Science & Technology*, 45(14), 6117–6123. <https://doi.org/10.1021/es200130u>.

<sup>7</sup> Morach, B., Clausen, M., Rogg, J., Brigl, M., Schulze, U., Dehnert, N., Hepp, M., V. Y., Kurth, T., Koeller, E. von, Burchardt, J., Witte, B., Obloj, P., Koktenturk, S., Grosse-Holz, F., & Meinel, O. S.-N. (2022, July 8). *The untapped climate opportunity in alternative proteins*. BCG Global.

<https://www.bcg.com/publications/2022/combating-climate-crisis-with-alternative-protein>.

<sup>8</sup> McNamara, E., Bomkamp, C. (2022). *Cultivated meat as a tool for fighting antimicrobial resistance*. *Nature Food* 3, 791–794. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-022-00602-y>.

<sup>9</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *Antibiotic Resistant Threats in the United States*. CDC.

<https://www.cdc.gov/antimicrobial-resistance/media/pdfs/2019-ar-threats-report-508.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Maryland Department of Commerce. (2026). *Life sciences*. Maryland Department of Commerce.

<https://business.maryland.gov/key-industries/life-sciences/>.

<sup>11</sup> Frew, C. (2026, February 13). *F3 Tech steps forward to lead Maryland's bid for a BioMADE biomanufacturing facility*. BioBuzz.

<https://news.biobuzz.io/2026/02/13/f3-tech-steps-forward-to-lead-marylands-bid-for-a-biomade-biomanufacturing-facility/>.

<sup>12</sup> See 21 the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301, et seq.), the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 601, et seq.), the Poultry Products Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 451, et seq.), and U.S. Food and Drug Administration & Department of Agriculture. (2019, March 7). *Formal Agreement Between FDA and USDA Regarding Oversight of Human Food Produced Using Animal Cell Technology Derived from Cell Lines of USDA-amenable Species*. FDA.

purchase cultivated meat by mistake, and there is no evidence that cultivated meat is harmful to the public.

### **A Ban on Cultivated Meat Invites Needless Litigation Risk**

Banning cultivated meat has drawn legal challenges in other states, and could do the same for Maryland. Currently, Texas and Florida have ongoing lawsuits against their cultivated meat ban laws.<sup>13</sup> Both cases have survived motions to dismiss on the District Court level and are proceeding on claims that the bans violate the Dormant Commerce Clause by unconstitutionally discriminating against out of state commerce.<sup>14</sup> The only court cultivated meat should be evaluated in, like any other regulated food product, is the court of public opinion.

### **Conclusion**

A ban on cultivated meat poses several risks and no credible benefit to Marylanders. Cultivated meat is already subject to federal oversight designed to ensure safety and accurate labeling. Prohibition would increase risks of harm to environmental and public health, deter innovation and investment in Maryland's bioeconomy, restrict consumer choice, and open the door for costly legal challenges.

For these reasons, GFI respectfully urges the Committee to oppose HB 1023.

Regards,

Tim Carey, J.D.

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<https://www.fda.gov/food/human-food-made-cultured-animal-cells/formal-agreement-between-fda-and-usda-regarding-oversight-human-food-produced-using-animal-cell>.

<sup>13</sup> See Fla. Stat. § 500.452, banning the manufacture, sale, holding or offering for sale, or distribution of cultivated meat in the state, and Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §§ 431.02105 & 433.057, imposing a moratorium on the sale and offering for sale of cultivated meat for two years.

<sup>14</sup> See *Wild Type, Inc. (d/b/a Wildtype) v. Shuford*, No. 1:25-cv-01408-ADA-ML, Order at pp. 6-8 (W.D. Tex. Jan. 16, 2026) (Albright, J.) and *UPSIDE Foods, Inc. v. Simpson*, No. 4:24-cv-00316-MW-MAF, Order at 19-22 (N.D. Fla. Apr. 25, 2025) (Walker, C.J.).