

Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (HB 32)

This bill will make the Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) a permanent entity within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management. The FSRC addresses emergency food security issues in the context of the larger imperative of building a just and sustainable food system.

Background:

Food insecurity is defined as “the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.” Put more simply: not knowing where your next meal will come from. Maryland ranks second highest in the nation for median household income¹, yet food insecurity continues to grow in prevalence. The Maryland Food Bank reports approximately 2 million Marylanders faced hunger in 2021. That’s a shocking 39% of Maryland households who are likely to be food insecure.² Indeed, the pandemic and rising inflation have worsened food insecurity.

In 2021 we sought to address the growing crisis of food insecurity in Maryland and established a Food System Resiliency Council, which coordinated Maryland’s response to food insecurity while building a more equitable food system.

The Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) issued an interim report in November, 2022³. It made 27 recommendations to improve food system resilience. Some of these recommendations will take meaningful investment, while others will take action by local and state governments, businesses, and community organizations. A key recommendation was for the work of the FSRC to continue so Maryland continues to prepare for, respond to, and recover from food system interruptions large and small, while ensuring inclusion of diverse voices across the food system landscape.

Solution:

This bill will make the Food System Resiliency Council a permanent entity within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

For more information please contact:

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¹<https://www.census.gov/search-results.html?q=average+per+capita+income&search.x=0&search.y=0&search=submit&page=1&stateGeo=none&searchtype=web&cssp=SERP>

² Maryland Food Bank. “What’s at Stake.” <https://mdfoodbank.org/hunger-in-maryland/whats-at-stake/>

³ <https://mdem.maryland.gov/Documents/2022%20FSRC%20Nov.%201%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf>