



January 21, 2022

The Honorable Paul Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 121 – Farm to Food Security Act

Dear Senator Pinsky:

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) [Food and Regional Agriculture Member \(FARM\) Policy Committee](#), we are writing to offer our support for SB 121 - Farm to Food Security Act. As the association of local governments in the metropolitan Washington region, COG supports measures that will increase food security and healthy food access, and small farmers, including farmers identifying as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and food system resiliency.

The Farm to Food Security Act proposes several important and foundational investments including an increase to Maryland Market Money, the establishment of the Maryland Food and Agricultural Resilience Mechanism (MD FARM) and the Farm to School Grant Pilot. MD FARM is a farm to food bank program, not dissimilar from a program established by the Commonwealth of Virginia and other states. With respect to the Farm to School Grant Pilot, in the District of Columbia, there has been an additional allocation of District funds for federally reimbursable school meals with a local food component for more than a decade. Further, the Farm to School Grant Pilot will prioritize applicants that “demonstrate arrangements that support minority or socially disadvantaged producers, processors, distributors, or businesses.”

COG’s FARM Policy Committee is supportive of the Farm to Food Security Act for its investments in food security, Maryland’s farm economy, and minority or socially disadvantaged farmers. The proposed bill supports policies, programs, and investments that our region needs for a more equitable, resilient food system. We hope it represents a down payment for greater investment in the future. We look forward to working with you on these issues and to assist with implementing programs that will positively impact food security and benefit BIPOC farmers and small farmers. Please consider us a resource on these issues.

Please contact Lindsay Smith, COG’s Regional Food Systems Planner at (202) 962-3309 or [lsmith@mwcog.org](mailto:lsmith@mwcog.org) if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mary Cheh in black ink.

Mary Cheh  
Chair, FARM Committee  
Councilmember  
District of Columbia

Handwritten signature of Craig Rice in black ink.

Craig Rice  
Vice Chair, FARM Committee  
Councilmember  
Montgomery County, Maryland

Handwritten signature of Jon Stehle in black ink.

Jon Stehle  
Vice Chair, FARM Committee  
Councilmember  
City of Fairfax, Virginia



C: Maryland State Senator Katie Hester  
Maryland State Delegate Lorig Charkoudian  
Monica Beyrouiti Nuñez, Government Relations Manager, COG