



Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Environment & Production Committee
Virtual Open Meeting
October 12, 2023 1:00pm-2:00pm

1. Welcome
 - a. Nancy Nunn facilitated the meeting on behalf of its Chair, Dr. Stephanie Lansing. The meeting Agenda and Recommendations were sent to attendees prior to the meeting.
2. Group Discussion
 - a. 2023 Recommendations Update
 - i. Digital Agriculture, E-Agriculture, Smart Farming
 1. Does this include broadband internet access for rural farms? Response from member: Broadband internet access is not addressed in the recommendation but remains in the parking lot.
 2. Would expansion in the creation of new food councils be included or excluded in this Technology in Agriculture Committee?
 3. Q. How are the “other states/other areas/regions” defined? It might be helpful to clarify.
 - ii. Financial and Educational Support to Increase On-Farm Composting of Food Waste Scrap Residuals
 1. MDE supports the overall recommendation, but objects to the use of the term “food waste” and concerns reported related to limitation to “on-farm”. Suggested wording is “need for infrastructure for organics recycling. “Financial and educational support is critical.
 2. MDE is welcome to express their concerns at the full Council meeting next week.



- iii. Increase Electrification Incentives for Anaerobic Digestion of Food Waste Residuals, Manure, and other Waste Products to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 1. No Funding needed.
 2. Legislation needed - it would increase the net metering beyond 200% .
 3. MDE recommends removing food waste and keeping it as food residuals - will be discussed at the 10/19 full Council meeting.
- iv. Agricultural Nutrient Management Planning Support
 1. Question:
 - a. Who is the intended beneficiary of this recommendation - cash crop farms (soybeans etc) or small and vegetable farms? Will the software upgrade also make this program more supportive of farms other than cash crop farms?
 - b. Response: That concern has been addressed in the discussion of this recommendation. The reason why this recommendation is revamped is to better reflect the current state of farming in MD, and for smaller farmers. This recommendation broadens the application of the NMP and updates the technology.
 - c. The substantial funding requested of \$750K will help to revamp the Nutrient Management planning software. Sustained funding of \$3.4 million annually is requested for employment changes, to hire two full-time employees at MDA & MDE, to provide cost of living increases for personnel and to provide training, education, maintenance and enforcement of the software and tools.
 - d. A question was posed concerning the last sentence of the document related to the Nutrient Management Plan. It sounds like only biological issues of soil health pertain to small farms. Perhaps it should be clarified that the biological aspect



applies to all farms, not just small farms. It was noted and will be addressed next week at the Council meeting.

- e. Recommendation to use food residuals in lieu of “waste”
 - f. Added language to clarify that the employees would be non-contract employees.
 - g. Question: Where is this funding coming from for software and services? This can be addressed at the Council meeting.
 - h. MDEM reminded all that if there are substantial content changes, this recommendation doesn't have to go to Council consideration for next week.
 - i. Question posed to the group: Is everyone comfortable moving forward with this recommendation?
 - i. No response was noted, to be taken as a yes with no objection.
2. Property Tax - Agricultural Land and Improvements Assessment
 - a. Resubmitting prior recommendation.
- v. Establish a Distributed Network of Cold Storage for Food System Resiliency
1. MDE has researched solar battery and battery storage of large trailers and has found cost effective solar battery trailers that are manufactured in the USA and used primarily by developing nations. These cost under \$10K and could reduce the long-term economic drain of cold storage. This could be a valuable solution for food recovery programs.
 2. Legislation required - yes.
 3. Funding required - yes. \$6.3 million funding is requested to build one larger walk-in unit and 2 smaller walk-in units for each of the 23 counties and Baltimore City.



- vi. Support statewide, regional, and local incentives and grant and education programs to increase the number of food waste diversion sites
 - 1. Legislation needed - yes.
 - 2. Funding - yes.
 - 3. MDE was recently awarded a grant that will help with the diversion research and site plans. MDE will create a food diversion plan to analyze infrastructure, locations, education needed, placement of generation materials, and post-digestate/compost markets. Data is started and will be completed in 20 months - best data to have equitable access not just in concentrated areas. First steps is to review organics recovery & recycling and then anaerobic digestion & composting - what are best methods and locations that would ensure access and education for those in that line of work.
 - 4. No concerns about this recommendation.
 - vii. Agricultural Apprenticeship Program
 - 1. Legislation - yes.
 - 2. Funding - yes for admin support from Maryland Dept. of Labor.
 - 3. No concerns about this recommendation.
3. Next steps and adjourn
- a. Next meeting - Council Meeting next Thursday, Oct. 19.
 - b. If no comments or concerns, the Council will vote on recommendations and all that are passed will be included in the Annual Report.
 - c. Council will receive recommendations in the next few days.