



Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Meeting Minutes for Apr 7, 2022

1. **Welcome/Roll Call**

- a. Quorum number determined at 17 members
- b. **FSRC Updates:** Secretary Russ Strickland indicated the previous meeting was canceled last month, due to ongoing focus on activities with legislation. However, subcommittees continued to meet, per the prearranged schedule to maintain focus on the upcoming report. Anna Sierra gave a special welcome to Brittany Cook, who started on Wednesday as the Food Resiliency Specialist. Vanessa Calaban will begin transitioning out of the position, as Brittany becomes more comfortable. Welcome Brittany!
MDEM is excited to begin building support for the council, as we move forward.
- c. **Supplement Budget Update:** Secretary Strickland reports the council request was submitted; however, the request has not been included in the Governor's supplemental budgets yet. We are monitoring to determine whether there will be another supplemental budget.
- d. **Lunch and Learn Update:** Vanessa Calaban reports two Lunch and Learn sessions were completed with adequate attendance and great communication. The next lunch and learn session is scheduled for Wednesday April 20, 2022 at noon, featured topic is introduction to resiliency hubs. Aubrey Germ and Lindsay Adams will be discussing Baltimore City Resiliency Hub Program. Brittany and Vanessa will be meeting with Aubrey and Lindsay on April 8, 2022, please email any request or questions of interest to Vanessa or Brittany prior to the meeting.



Michael J Wilson requested written materials be provided before Lunch and Learn sessions, to improve efficiency and leave more time for Q&A.

Anna Sierra agreed to have MDEM staff work with presenters to ensure written materials are made available prior to the lunch and learn sessions.

Vanessa and Brittany are currently working on scheduling lunch and learn sessions in May and June. Lunch and Learn sessions will be scheduled for the third Wednesday every month at noon.

- e. **Nov 1, 2022, Report Update timeline review:** Anna Sierra reports the Midyear update report will be completed, per the council request. The midyear report will detail the subcommittee's status on parking lot items, address status of items recommended as legislative changes, and other legislation monitored by the council that will affect the food system. Subcommittees are focusing their efforts on parking lot items to address in the report. The target report review date is May, and target approval date is scheduled for June. Outcomes of food-related legislation will be ready for review and included in the report.
2. **Legislative Session Update**
 - a. Total bills monitored during the legislative session include 25 bills, and 18 crossfiles (committee recommended support of 11 bills, recommended monitoring 10 bills). Support with amendments or consideration were offered for two bills, and two other bills had no considerations indicated.
 - b. Sine Die scheduled April 11
 - c. HB147- Maryland FARM Bill (Delegate Charkoudian's bill) encompassed three council recommendations in one bill. This bill requested the following:
 - Requires FY21 and every year after funding allocation, to the Maryland Farms and Family Fund; establishes the Maryland Food and Agriculture Resiliency Mechanism Grant Program for charitable food orgs and food banks to procure, process, and transport of local food products; establishes the Maryland



Farm-to-School Meal Grant Pilot Program to incentivize production, procurement, and provision of local foods.

- Several FSRC Report Recommendations included in the bill
- Currently under review in the House after passing both chambers, amended

This bill passed in both chambers, with different fiscal notes and funding amounts attached. The bill will be reviewed by the conference committees between the house and senate, to make a final determination of the bill's funding and language. Approval will be granted once the bill is in its final form. Advocacy can be done with the conference committee's representatives.

- d. **Tracker link was provided.** Bolded text has passed the original chamber.
- e. **Highlighted Bills include:**
 - HB0147/SB0121 Public Schools- Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste: currently in committee and referred to W&M
 - HB0156 Local Governments- Urban Agricultural Incentive Zones- Authorization: This is a monitor bill, that has not moved out of committee
 - HB0178 Public Health- Cottage Food Businesses- Annual Revenues: Is a committee supported bill that was sent to the Governor
 - HB0179 Food Environment Report: Supported by Delegate Queen was significantly amended, to a work group tasked with studying food environment reports, and best practice on creating reports. This is in committee.
 - HB0184/SB0229 Environment on Farm Composting Facilities- Permit Exemption: This bill provides the ability for smaller farms to begin composting processes without arduous procedure. The Senate bill passed third reading, and is now in the house.
 - HB0456/SB0957- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement: Original bill provided seniors



with 45 dollars in benefits, prior to the pandemic benefits were 15 dollars per month. However due to a change in the calculation on the Federal level, the benefit amount is 20 dollars per month. Supplement benefits are 30 dollars per month for 62 and over, a proposal was presented to raise the amount for 45, governor proposal 40 dollars for benefits.

- HB540/SB0437- Agriculture- University of Maryland Extension- Urban Farmer Assistance: This committee supported bill has passed second reading in the chamber and may go to third reader. Funding was included in the supplemental bill; therefore, funds are appropriated the bill will just need to be passed.
- HB0680- Baltimore County- Property Tax Credit- Supermarkets: This monitor bill has passed second reader in the chamber; we will continue to monitor.
- HB0855/SB0942- Agriculture- Urban Agriculture Water and Power Infrastructure Grant Program and Funds- Establishment: supported bill referred to the opposite chamber and remains in committee.
- HB1163 Primary and Secondary Education Virtual Education- Requirements: Monitoring bill as there is some mention related to nutrition and/or food services. This bill is referred to ED.
- HB1216 Department of Agriculture- Urban Agriculture Grant Fund: Supported bill was referred.
- HB1228/SB0830 Natural Resources- Oysters, Spat, Shells and Substrate: Monitor bill has been passed.
- SB0263/HB0661 Health- Food Services Facilities- Beverage Options with Children's Meals: Bill was supported, but considered unfavorable in committee and withdrawn in the Senate.
- SB0362 Primary and Secondary Education- Virtual Schools- Revisions- Monitor bill which included some nutrition services, this bill is in committee.



- SB0378/HB0646 Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland- Funding for Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission: Monitor bill referred in the senate version, however the house version did not leave the house.
 - SB0630/HB0706 Maryland Department of Emergency Management- Office of Resilience: Committee discussed and mentioned in the report as a recommendation. Committee provided a letter of support however the FSRC was not included in the language of this bill. The bill was heavily amended. Secretary Strickland indicates MDEM is building situational awareness (where, when, why, and how to resolve) through coordination. The chief resiliency office will provide MDEM the opportunity to coordinate (not control) resiliency across the state enterprise. There are 16 sectors of the infrastructure protection program, which is beyond food, and other areas. Any support offered from FSRC members on this bill is greatly appreciated. Advocacy opportunities available with the subcommittee. Voting list will be rechecked.
 - SB0755/HB1425 Infrastructure Grants- Federal Infrastructure Investment and Coordination Unit- Established (Senator Hester): Related to funding federal infrastructure investment bill passed in January. Bill referred to the house rules committee.
 - SB0393/HB0414 Economic Development- Project Restore Program and Fund: monitor bill is currently in committee. Has passed out of the Senate, but not out of the house.
3. **Environment and Production Update**
- a. Stephanie Lansing reports the committee meets at least every two-week to focus on parking lot items. Specific items being researched include:
 - Create workshops or seminars (in person or virtual) at community centers, farmers markets, food pantries, schools, etc. on preparing the type of local food available in Maryland.



4. **Distribution and Access Update**

a. Vanessa Calaban indicated the subcommittee discussed the parking lot items, to identify which items fall under the category of distribution and access. Identified items were further evaluated to determine what can be accomplished in a Sprint fashion. Two items were determined, including:

- Resiliency Hubs: Examining the model, and how to incorporate food resiliency into this paradigm. Meg Kimmel and Aubrey Germ (from Baltimore Office of Sustainability) discussed more information related to resiliency hubs. Resiliency hubs will be further discussed during the next Lunch and Learn in two weeks. Diana Taylor indicated in the past resiliency hubs were utilized for emergency crisis situations, however the subcommittee is looking for hubs to be utilized by the community. Our interest is in resiliency hubs that are going into the community to ask what is needed, that provide an educational component, community garden, and solar power assistance. Any hub that will provide community sustainability during a crisis. Anna Sierra highlighted there is heightened focus on resiliency hubs, specifically a bill passed requiring Maryland Energy Administration to support a program to establish resiliency hubs, micro grid tech, and solar panels. FEMA has several new initiatives to promote equity and access. MEA grant has a lot of language regarding the labor force, specifically in low-income areas.
- Developing a survey or focus group with food pantry clients and producers, to determine how to connect food insecure populations with access to food. This item is still in development. The Subcommittee meeting is today.

5. **Council Member Round Table and Update**

a. Mischelle A. Williams shared today is her internal deadline for summer SNAP applications. Deadline will be extended to allow more time to participate, 10 out of 24 applications received.



- b.** Beth Brewster indicated the Blue catfish event was rescheduled for November 6, 2022, more information to come. There will be a Spirulina open house, which is a superfood (one tablespoon can take away malnutrition in a child). Farm to freezer project is still in development, and the mobile pantry is on the street and is attracting interest.
- c.** Sydney Daigle reports Prince George's County Department of Social Services has launched an office of Food Security. An update was requested regarding the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement application for the State, which provides funding to purchase local food for underserved communities and prioritizes small farmers. Leslie Sessom-Parks MSDE is closely examining the application.
- d.** Diana Taylor requested an update regarding the proposed classes related to equity. Anna Sierra indicated, Leadership was given an initial plan, which Leadership determined alterations were needed. We are hopeful after Sine die leadership will be able to revisit this request, however MDEM is looking at other resources to appropriately approach this topic.
- e.** Michael J Wilson and Crystal FitzSimons will be presenting tomorrow's COG FARM Committee Meeting, as will MD farmer, Russ Shlagel. Link to agenda and connection information: <https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/4/8/food-and-agriculture-regional-member-farm-policy-committee/>
- f.** Lindsay Smith requested Secretary Strickland provide a short summary of the Supplemental Request from earlier in the agenda. Anna Sierra reported the council developed a list of recommendations that had funding attached. These recommendations were put in a survey at the request of DBM, so that council could prioritize the list. Anna can provide the list, this list is separate from MDEM. 100,000 has been funded to MDEM for the food council report beginning in FY23.
- g.** Berran Rogers reports a new opportunity for a farm risk management training series, this workshop covers 5 areas of risk



(production, marketing, financial, human resource, legal risk). This series is free to farmers who attend, information will be shared.

- h.** Secretary Strickland shared that there is an increased focus with FEMA identifying social vulnerabilities, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The National emergency managers association has embraced and created a new committee within the organization and signed a MOU with the IDEI (a nonprofit created to help those in emergency management with program areas and individual department areas). MDEM could have funding to address this within the department. Increased funding has been provided for a statewide mitigation project; the goal is to get resources in areas with social vulnerabilities. A summer study may be conducted via proposed bill (status pending) or with MDEM; to establish a fund in the state for individual assistance during disasters, allowing assistance to be delivered in a timely fashion. All support is appreciated. MDEM is now homeless due to reconstruction, therefore COOP bags were issued to all staff, to allow continued operations. There are designated areas where staff may meet. The state emergency operation center and 24 hours staff will COOP to the State's highway facility for the next two years. There may be a temporary facility for parts of the MDEM staff to use for the next two years. Please continue to be patient during the transition.
- i.** Anna Sierra reported the next upcoming meeting is tentatively in-person, location is to be determined, information will be sent in advance. Meetings will continue to be offered virtually in consideration for those who live a further distance. Please communicate any questions or concerns related to in-person meetings.
- j.** Theresa Stahl shared Western Maryland food council (which includes Allegheny, Garrett, and Washington County) a grant that established two directories (agriculture education directory and community garden directory) for all three counties. In addition, the grant establishes a farmer to restaurant training program, as well as surveying food pantries to identify needed infrastructure



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for cold storage. Another grant was procured for a bi-local campaign in Allegheny County to create a website or “one-stop-shop” for individuals looking for local products.

6. **Adjourn**