



Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Meeting Minutes for May 5, 2022

Time Agenda Item

10:00 **Welcome - Heather Bruskin, Co-Chair**

- Roll Call - Anna Sierra, MDEM
 1. Quorum number determine at 19 present members
 2. Minutes Adopted from April
 3. Meeting Agenda Adopted
- **General Updates - Anna Sierra and Brittany Cook, MDEM**
 1. Nov. 1 2021 Report Update timeline review – this report will include legislative session summary, Environment and Production subcommittee updates, Distribution and Access subcommittee updates, and any progression solidified from the “Next Steps” section of the Nov. 1 report.
 - a. May 10- initial draft
 - b. May 16- comments due
 - c. May 23- final draft
 - d. June 2- consider for adoption and publication
 2. Lunch and Learn Updates
 - a. May 18th – Topic: MD THINK presentation will introduce the MD THINK platform. The first program of its kind in the nation, MD THINK is a cloud-based technology platform that is integrating the state’s health and human services applications to more effectively and efficiently deliver vital services to Marylanders.
 - b. June 15th – Topic: Food as Medicine with Giant, this presentation focuses on community health programs, ongoing work with ward 8 in Washington DC, and efforts to foster food equity, food justice, and food integrity within the

community.

- c. Comments & Questions
 - i. Will the MD THINK presentation include app utilization or navigation to assist it identifying challenges or barriers?
 - ii. Considering the emergency allotment/benefit changes to Maryland's assistance programs during the pandemic, there is some regret about May's lunch and learning focusing on the app utilization, rather than policies.
 - iii. DHS confirmed demonstration and system platform utilization will be shared, additional information regarding the platform can be given individually at request.

10:15 **Legislative Session Briefing - Anna Sierra, MDEM**

- 1. Opening Remarks
 - a. Farm to Food Security Package passed with some funding, which includes the following:
 - i. Funding for Maryland Market Money
 - ii. Creation for Farm to School Program without funding
 - iii. Farm to Foodbank with funding amount 200,000
 - b. Continued advocacy in January
 - c. School Compost bill passed without designated funds (9,000 postcards were sent in support from elementary to high school students)
 - d. FSRC has become a respected lobbying arm within one year of the council's creation
 - e. The legislator will have the ability to adjust the budget in 2023, therefore it is important to include funding recommendations in the next Nov.1 report
 - f. Establishing the Office of Resilience passed
- 2. Supported Bills- sent to the Governor (available information on the Leg. Quick Look Doc)
 - a. SB121 (HB147) - Maryland FARM Program, Farms & Families Fund, Farm-to-School Grant Pilot
 - b. SB124 (HB150) - Public School Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste

- c. HB178 - Cottage Food Business Revenues
 - d. HB456 (SB957) - SNAP State Supplement
 - e. HB540/SB437 - UM Extension - Urban Farmer Assistance
 - f. SB630 (HB706) - Office of Resilience
 - g. HB680 - Baltimore Co. Supermarkets property tax credit
 - h. HB1228/SB830 - Spat, Shells, and Substrate – Oysters
 - i. HB855/SB942 - Urban Agriculture Water and Power Infrastructure Grant Program and Fund Establishment
3. SB121 (HB147) – Maryland Farm Bill
- a. Associated FSRC recommendations include the following:
 - i. Recommendation 1.4 - Establish the FARM program
 - ii. Recommendation 4.1 - Provide incentives to encourage Maryland school systems to purchase food
 - iii. Recommendation 2.2 - Expand and modernize use of food benefits, including Maryland Market Money and EBT
 - iv. Bill was significantly amended including funding, Legislative quick look will provide specific details.
4. SB630 (HB706) – MDEM Office of Resilience
- a. Establishes the Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) and Office of Resilience in Maryland Department of Emergency Management. CRO will be at the Executive Service level, and Secretarial appointment
 - b. Goals, roles, and responsibilities of CRO and Office of Resilience related to state resilience effort and strategy are outlined
 - c. Requires UMCES to study and report on State resilience baseline, developing resilience assessments for local government benchmarking, developing resilience indicators, and producing economic analysis and policy benchmark reporting
 - d. There is no mandated funding for the Office
5. HB456 (SB957)- Supplement Nutrition Assistance

Program – State Supplement

- a. (Associated FSRC recommendation) FSRC recommendation 2.2 - Expand and modernize use of food benefits, including Maryland Market Money and EBT
 - b. FSRC recommendations did not mention SNAP, however this effort is supported by Council members and aligns with FSRC objectives/goals
6. Legislative Debriefing - Determined Best Practices (from survey) SB24 (HB150) Public School Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste
- a. (Associated FSRC recommendation) FSRC recommendation 4.5 - Increase education on source separation of food waste and possibilities for on-farm composting/digestion
 - b. Establishes a grant program to award public schools to develop and implement programs for reducing food waste and establish composting efforts
 - c. Requires Maryland Association of Environmental Outdoor Education to review applications and select recipients
7. SB437/HB540- UM Extension – Urban Farmer Assistance
- a. (Associated FSRC recommendation) FSRC recommendation 4.3 - Diversify opportunities for small- and mid-scale producers (specifically focused on meat production)
 - a. Requires UM Extension to hire an agent dedicated to urban farm production methods and crop management
 - b. Requires UM Extension to hire an agent dedicated to urban farm and agribusiness management
8. Supported Bills – Did not Pass
- a. HB184/SB229 - On-farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption
 - b. HB1216 - Urban Agriculture Grant Fund
 - c. HB857/SB971 - Concentration of Poverty School Grant Program - School Lunch
 - d. HB1027/SB921 - Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility
 - e. HB1352 - Health and Wellness Standards -

Correctional Facilities

- f. SB263/HB661 - Beverage Options with Children's Meals (UNFAV/Withdrawn)
 - a. Weekly updates were helpful and perspectives of participants were helpful in understanding various bills
 - b. Tracker was used regularly by most participants
 - c. Staff seem to have identified all food-system related bills
- 9. Determined areas for Improvement
 - a. More in-depth analysis of bills that directly impact the food system
 - b. Lack of organizational structure, guiding mission, and vision resulted in somewhat unfocused effort to support legislation
 - c. Better understand and direct impact of FSRC
 - d. Distribute the information on legislative session more widely (to the entire Council)
 - e. Overview of State budget process would be helpful
- 10. Comments and Questions
 - a. FSRC's main priority should be information sharing rather than advocacy, due to the diverse expertise of its members
 - b. The goal of the FSRC is to assist in driving the State to a more resilience system; we need to ensure best efforts are being put forward in recommendations
 - c. Recommendations are gray areas as it relates to advocacy and information sharing
 - d. Will the FSRC develop goals and a strategic plan? (Once recommendations have been determined regarding the council's future structure, a strategic plan can be identified). The Communication and Coordination subcommittee will begin researching options to present for the full council to consider.

11:00 **Environment and Production Update**

Distribution and Access Update

1. Environment and Production Update – continued work on remaining “parking lot” items
 - a. Item 1 - Create workshops or seminars (in person or virtual) at community centers, farmers markets, food pantries, schools, etc. on preparing the types of local food available in Maryland
 - i. Existing Resource [Google Document](#) is evolving but still needs updates to Identify holes, determine if such a resource database of this nature exists in MD and, determine where/how the document will be housed (based on #2 above)
 - b. Item 2 - Fully fund the Maryland Healthy Soils Initiative
 - i. The subcommittee reviewed the Maryland Healthy Soils Committee final report, which created new programs (Healthy Soils Competitive Fund, and Grant Cover Crops Plus Program)
 - ii. Group discussion included: Needs to provide support/nutrient management planning for diversified crops/small farms, including rotating vegetable and cover crops (cover crop program geared to row crops), additional research on healthy food production using fertilizer (biological activity), and lack of information regarding minimum amount of fertilizer needed
 - iii. Subject matter experts will be invited to speak to the subcommittee
 - c. Item 3 - Better define the terms “local” and “regional” for the purposes of state food policy.
 - i. A new DE/MD Regional Food System [Webinar Series](#) is running April to June 2022; Mondays at noon.
 - ii. MDA Certified MD Farm Enterprise Program can be used by regional farms but need to file a MD nutrient management plan to participate
 - iii. Maryland’s Best website will be updated
 - iv. 4P Foods is a potential Lunch and Learn to determine how more interaction with food hubs is possible

- d. Item 4 - Mitigate the carbon footprint of Maryland's food system
 - i. Created a sub-subcommittee led by Chloe Waterman
 - ii. Sub-subcommittee plans on following IPCC's guidance and recommendations that would mitigate climate change by shifting the types of food produced, the types of food purchased, and the methods of food production in Maryland
 - iii. Note: some recommendations would overlap with other focus areas in E&P
- e. Item 5 - Address climate change impacts on farmers, regional and local food systems, and how to plan for adaptation.
 - i. Created a sub-subcommittee led by Nancy Nunn and Niamh Shortt
 - ii. Researching how Maryland can use these policies and subsidies to incentivize producers to use climate smart practices within current food production methods. New USDA grant program on Climate Smart Solutions for Climate Change released Spring 2022
 - iii. Researching the idea to partner with food hubs to collect data (using the enrollment survey) from farmers who sell to the hubs to share practices with buyers (example: Future Harvest is involved with a Soil Health enrollment survey, and Million Acre Challenge)
- f. Item 6 - Restart the Maryland Farmers Market Association
 - i. MARBIDCO (Steve McHenry) is leading an exploratory listening session at restarting the Maryland Farmers Market Association
 - ii. Two USDA grant opportunities including: Farmers Markets Promotion Program and Local Food Promotion Program
- g. Questions and Comment:
 - i. The Healthy Soils Program will work on carbon sequestration, an amendment was made in the Climate Solution bill for

funding the Healthy Soils Program
(500,000 per year, for the next five years)

2. Distribution and Access Update
 - a. Initially focused on how to ensure fair distribution and access across the state
 - b. The subcommittee determines needs are unique from one local jurisdiction to another. The committee determined implementation of local jurisdiction food councils involving key stakeholders would be an effective method for coordinating resources inclusively
 - c. The committee proposed jurisdictional food councils follow mandated operations/practices developed by the subcommittee
 - d. Local management board experts will present to the subcommittee for further research
 - e. The subcommittee is currently researching existing food policy councils to determine successes, barriers, and challenges (subject matter experts have presented to the subcommittee)
 - f. Discovery questions were developed to target specific areas of interest
 - g. Comments/Questions
 - i. Finding funding is challenging for long-term operation of a food council (key consideration)
 - ii. Seed funding is critical to start-up a food council
 - iii. State level mandates will be needed to ensure standards are upheld
 - iv. Food desert mapping and bill- Sen. Hester and Anne Palmer will meet separately to discuss

11:30

Council Member Round Table & Updates

1. Risk Analysis Unit
 - a. Audience/Intent- This document was developed at the request from MDEM staff, to the risk analysis group. A briefing for the FSRC on existing supply chain conditions and vulnerabilities based on open source resources was created. The purpose of this briefing is to provide a basic knowledge of current information

related to the supply chain. Note: MDEM Risk Analysis Group are not food system experts, information provided is written/analyzed in a simple form.

b. Product Update

2. Michael J- MD Hunger Solution will be engaging in advocacy activities related to issues regarding food, this is outside of efforts within the council, anyone interested in participating please contact us.
3. Anne Palmer- Two resources will be available date TBD: (1) Food Council Policy Guide for starting councils, (2) Municipal Toolkit for Resilience in the Food System
4. Chloe Waterman- Maryland Food and Climate Voters Guide coming out late May.
5. FSRC Co-Chair election coming in June

1200pm **Adjourn**