



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 772

Maryland Green Purchasing Committee - Food Procurement – Greenhouse Gas Emissions

DATE: MARCH 3, 2020

CBF POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) SUPPORTS HB 772. This bill would establish a process for tracking greenhouse gas emissions associated with the state's food purchases and reduce emissions by 25% by 2030.

Healthy farms and regenerative food production systems are a requisite for a healthy ecosystem. The modern food system, whereby produce is commonly shipped across the country or internationally before arriving in grocery stores, creates food waste and produces tons of harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Purchasing local food reduces these emissions and benefits the environment, human health, Maryland farmers, and the local economy.

The agriculture sector accounts for nearly one third of global greenhouse gas emissions and is the largest source of non-point pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay. Supporting locally grown food from sustainable farms is also integral to CBF's mission to Save the Bay.

HB 772 recognizes that the State's own food procurement is the most direct point of leverage to reduce emissions associated with food consumption. Reducing food waste and shifting food purchases towards climate-friendly diets were ranked the third and fourth, respectively, most effective climate solutions from Project Drawdown, a climate mitigation project led by Paul Hawken and contributed to by more than 200 scientists, policymakers, and other experts.

Oakland, California's Oakland Unified School District saved \$42,000 and cut their carbon footprint 14% by shifting their menus toward more climate-friendly foods, and they increased local purchasing and student meal satisfaction at the same time. Maryland schools spent \$18 million on local food served in schools according to the most recent USDA Farm to School Census. CBF supports local food purchases through its Buy Fresh Buy Local Chesapeake program which helps consumers, sustainable farms, and businesses find each other and support efforts to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay. **This bill would encourage purchases by more Maryland institutions of food grown or raised in Maryland using regenerative agricultural practices which provide additional carbon sequestration potential.**

A recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report affirmed that we only have a decade left to avoid irreversible climate damage, and Maryland must do its part to protect its citizens and the environment. HB 772 would make three positive changes: require state agencies report on food procurement emissions; require establishment of best practices; and establish a goal of food-based emissions reduction of 25% by 2030. For these reasons, CBF SUPPORTS HB 772 and urges a FAVORABLE report from the Health and Government Operations Committee. For more information, please contact Rob Schnabel, Land Restoration Scientist, at RSchnabel@cbf.org or 443.482.2175.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 107,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.