

An Affiliate of
the Maryland Association
of Counties, Inc.



Reply to:

DATE: February 23, 2021
TO: Members, Health and Government Operations Committee
FROM: Maryland Association of County Health Officers
Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors
RE: HB 889 Public Health – Cottage Food Businesses - Annual Revenues

The Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors (the Conference) and the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) **OPPOSE** HB 889. The Conference and MACHO are affiliates of the Maryland Association of Counties and represent county environmental health directors and county Health Officers who lead the state's 24 local public health departments.

The Conference and MACHO do not agree with increasing the revenue limit to \$100,000 for cottage food businesses. Although cottage foods are potentially non-hazardous foods, quadrupling preparation in non-regulated residential kitchens increases the risk of toxic contamination and unintentional adulteration with allergenic ingredients. Even small amounts of allergens such as peanuts can have life-threatening consequences for the public.

Additionally, the selling of cottage foods in grocery stores increases the risk of incomplete traceback. Product distribution will take place outside of traditional wholesaler networks, with their precise inventories and delivery dates. Increasing the revenue limit to \$100,000 also increases the associated risks. In the event of a foodborne outbreak or toxic contamination, investigations involving cottage foods will be hampered, leaving more lives at risk.

Accordingly, the Conference and MACHO requests the Committee give HB 889 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this matter. If you have further questions concerning this written testimony, please contact:

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