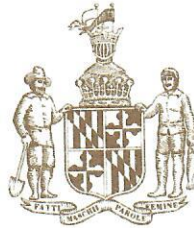


ROBERT G. CASSILLY
Legislative District 34
Harford County

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on Federal Relations



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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January 25, 2022

RE: Senate Bill 39 – Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Returning to State Meat Processing Inspection (Farms Buy Local Act)

Dear Committee Members:

I request your support for SB 39. This legislation is intended to address negative consequences to: food security, environmental impacts, food quality, and “buy local” programs caused by our overreliance on large, centralized meat processing facilities. As the recent report from the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council points out, the current global pandemic and subsequent response “highlighted and exacerbated systemic challenges in the food system on local, state, and national levels.” We have now come full circle in our understanding of the safest, healthiest, most environmentally sound, and most reliable practices in the management of our food supply chain. Years ago, when our state inspection program was terminated, the conventional thought was to streamline regulations and standards by promoting large scale harvesting of livestock. The result of that policy change was the closure of many of the small meat processing facilities across the state. As a result, Maryland farmers now have to sell their products to major producers or rely on processing facilities in other states. In Harford County, our three local processors have been reduced to one and farmers frequently rely on Pennsylvania facilities. The negative impacts of the current status on food security were made painfully clear during the closures of the large processing facilities due to the COVID 19 virus. The goal of the legislation is to investigate the potential environmental, social, and economic advantages we can achieve by expanding small, local livestock processors across the state and understand the best processes and mechanisms available to achieve an expansion of local facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Cassilly".

Senator Bob Cassilly