



February 21, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 559 – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation

Dear Senator Guzzone:

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) [Food and Regional Agriculture Member \(FARM\) Policy Committee](#), we are writing to offer our support for SB 559 – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation. As the association of local governments in the metropolitan Washington region, COG supports measures that will strengthen programs that support childhood nutrition and well-being. This includes using federal, state, and local legislative efforts to make access to school meals free for all students in the region.

SB 559 would increase the Governor’s required annual appropriation to support Maryland Meals for Achievement’s (MMFA) In-Classroom Breakfast Program from \$7,550,000 to \$12,050,000 in the annual budget bill. MMFA provides state funding to supplement federal meal reimbursements so that participating schools can offer free breakfast in the classroom for all students. It also supports investments in the minor equipment required to do this. Participating schools see higher breakfast participation and improved student attendance and behavior. We know that good nutrition is one foundation for being ready to learn. A school is eligible to apply when at least 40 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. MMFA has never been fully funded. Increased funding would allow a greater number of eligible schools to participate.

COG’s FARM Policy Committee is supportive of SB 559 – Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Annual Appropriation for its expanded investment in childhood food security, nutrition, and well-being.

Please contact Lindsay Smith, COG’s Regional Food Systems Planner at (202) 962-3309 or lsmith@mwcog.org if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jon Stehle'.

Jon Stehle
Chair, FARM Policy Committee
Councilmember
City of Fairfax, Virginia

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kate Kennedy'.

Kate Kennedy
Vice Chair, FARM Policy Committee
Councilmember
City of College Park, Maryland



C:
Monica Beyrouti Nuñez, Government Relations Manager, COG