

MARYLAND ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



Date: February 8, 2023

Bill: House Bill 152-Department of Agriculture – Urban Agriculture Fund

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee
The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND) represents nearly 1,200 Registered & Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionists in the state who work in a variety of facilities and agencies to provide education related to nutrition for the benefit of the health our citizens. We support **House Bill 152**.

As drafted the bill: “This bill expands the purpose and scope of the Urban Agriculture Grant Program and the Urban Agriculture Grant Fund, which are administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). First, the bill expands the scope of the program to apply to agricultural producers in an urban area, rather than just Baltimore City. Second, the bill expands the purpose and authorized uses of the fund to provide grants to qualified applicants, rather than just nonprofit organizations in Baltimore City. From fiscal 2025 through 2029, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$250,000 to the fund. The bill also makes various changes to provisions governing regulations that MDA must adopt relating to the grant program.”

The purpose of the program is to increase the viability of urban farming and improve access to urban-grown foods. The bill will expand the scope of the program into other counties. To the extent this program can increase the availability of fresh food and vegetables in Baltimore City and surrounding counties it can go a long way to address many of the food insecurity concerns that persist in these areas. Food insecurity is a term defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that indicates that the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, or the ability to acquire such food, is limited or uncertain for a household.[1]

We urge you to **Support House Bill 152**. Thank you for your consideration.

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References

1. <https://www.mdhungersolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-MD> retrieved Jan 20, 2023