



**Testimony to the Montgomery County Council  
Submitted by Manna Food Center in support of  
Bill 20-22: Office of Food Systems Resilience  
June 2022**

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Council:

Manna Food Center urges you to **SUPPORT** Bill 20-22, which will establish an Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR) in Montgomery County. As part of our decades of service as the designated food bank of the county, our long-standing commitment to the work of the Montgomery County Food Council, as well as our current administration of the Community Food Rescue network, Manna is a strong advocate for and contributor to a sustainable, fair food system. As the County moves from an emergency pandemic to the challenges of rising inflation and persistent social injustice, the Office of Food Systems Resilience will take up the important role of being a partner to the not-for-profit community, as well as businesses and other public entities, to continue community-based, systems-oriented, and data driven strategies to achieve Food for All.

Effective food system work requires a balanced approach that recognizes the unique roles and intersections between policy and practice. The issues at stake include food security, public health, the food economy, and environmental sustainability. The COVID-19 pandemic offered a preview of the types of food system disruptions threatened by climate change or global political crisis. With the OFSR, Montgomery County will be better prepared to meet these coming challenges.

The Office of Food Systems Resilience would be responsible for partnering with Manna and other community actors to create and implement the next Food Security Plan, as well as guide and steward both short and long-term community investments and policy directions. Local government staff with policy and best practice expertise, as well as decision-making authority, over resources including Federal funding allocation, institutional procurement, legislative action, and cross-jurisdictional coordination, is critical.

We believe that in the spirit of transparency, accountability to County Council and the community, as well as alignment with countywide, community-based priorities, the Director of the Office of Food Systems Resiliency should be an appointed position. As an organization committed to being participant-centered and data driven, we are eager to work with the Office of Food Systems Resilience to continue to advance a stronger food system. At all levels of the food system from mitigating supply chain vulnerabilities, to decreasing food waste, to creating a more environmentally sustainable food system partnership with the OFSR and the community will yield a range of nutrition, economic, and health benefits for our diverse and vibrant community. **Manna Food Center is FOR Bill 20-22 and urges your support FOR this bill.**

For more information about our work or our testimony, please contact: Jackie DeCarlo, CEO, at [jackie@mannafood.org](mailto:jackie@mannafood.org)