



## THE OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

Jeremy V. Criss  
*Director*

Dear County Council:

The Office of Agriculture works to promote and sustain agriculture in Montgomery County by providing assistance to the farm community. The assistance encourages the expansion and economic viability of the operations to facilitate increased local food production. Though this is only one small piece of a vibrant, resilient, and equitable local food system. Therefore, The OAG would like to share its support for Bill 20-22 which establishes an Office of Food Systems Resiliency. In a county with a population of over one million, it is vital that the County Government, farmers, food assistance providers and other nonprofit organizations focused on food systems, work seamlessly together to support a more resilient local food network.

For years, the OAG, in its limited capacity, has been actively engaged with both local and regional stakeholders in ongoing food system support efforts. As part of COG's regional ag workgroup, the OAG participated in the development of "[what Our Region Grows](#)" which provides a snapshot of the state of the regions agriculture as well as the general food production demand and economic contributions. The [Farm2Foodbank](#) Program which provides fresh, healthy food to our foodbanks for those in need while simultaneously supporting County farms and the expansion of local food production is an example of a successful local project in partnership with Manna, the Montgomery County Food Council, and Community Food Rescue.

A new Office of Food System Resiliency would provide additional focus and resources to help advance the work already being done by the County's amazing food system organizations such as those noted above in creating a more efficient, resilient, and equitable food system in Montgomery County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeremy V. Criss".

Jeremy Criss  
Director, Montgomery County Office of Agriculture