



January 7, 2022

The Honorable Jim McGovern
Congressman for the 2nd District of Massachusetts
370 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health

Dear Congressman McGovern:

On behalf of the [Food and Regional Agriculture Member \(FARM\) Policy Committee](#) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), we are writing to offer our support for H.R.5724 - White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health Act. As the association of local governments in the metropolitan Washington region, COG supports measures that will increase food security and food system resiliency.

Now is the time to hold such a national conference to usher in an updated and wholistic approach to ending hunger and improving health and nutrition. Against a backdrop of growing local, state, and regional investments to support food security, collaboration, and food system resilience, the pandemic has heightened understanding of the critical role that federal nutrition programs play as our first line of defense against hunger. At the same time, there are gaps in who is served by these programs and persistent disparities in who is burdened by food insecurity. These issues require national dialogue and action at all levels of government.

Reducing food insecurity, including through the expansion of federal nutrition benefit programs, is a central goal of FARM's and one of COG's legislative priorities. We believe a White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health would be a critical forum for this discussion; as such, we have a strong interest in participating. We see this as an opportunity to share what we have learned during COVID-19 about the ways that local, state, and federal policy can respond to support healthy food access and more equitable regional food systems, as well as to learn from others.

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,

Three handwritten signatures in black ink are displayed horizontally. From left to right, they correspond to Mary Cheh, Craig Rice, and Jon Stehle.

Mary Cheh
Chair, FARM Committee
Councilmember
District of Columbia

Craig Rice
Vice Chair, FARM Committee
Councilmember
Montgomery County, Maryland

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

C: Monica Beyrouiti Nuñez, Government Relations Manager, COG
Rachel Mackey, NACo Associate Legislative Director, Human Services and Education