

**MARYLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS**  
**BILL REVIEW MEETING MINUTES**  
**JANUARY 26, 2021**  
**9:00 A.M.**

The Maryland State Advisory Council on Health and Wellness held a public meeting to review specific legislative bills on 1/26/2021, beginning at 9:00 A.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Salliann Alborn  
Mary Backley  
Mary Pat Bertacchi, RDN  
Jonathan Dayton  
Jennifer Eastman  
Mychelle Farmer, M.D.  
Gary Gerstenblith, M.D.  
Roger Harrell  
Jessica Kiel, RDN  
Linda Kline  
Namisa Kramer  
Julie Maneen  
Cameron Pollock  
Vaple Robinson, Ph.D., R.N.  
Jason Semanoff  
Afton Thomas, M.D.  
Teresa Titus-Howard, Ph.D.  
Kristin Watson, Pharm.D.  
Pamela Williams  
Vanina Wolf  
Pamela Xenakis, RDN

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Summit Bassi, M.D.  
Angela Deal  
Lois A. Freeman  
Rita Kalyani, M.D.  
Seth Martin, M.D.  
Aruna Nathan, M.D.  
Rachel Pigott  
Vivienne Rose, M.D.  
Kelsie Shannon  
Geeta Sharma  
Sara Vazer, M.D.

**MDH STAFF PRESENT**

Amanda Klein  
Larry McNeely  
Kristi Pier  
Alexandra Nowalk

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT**

None present.

**I. Open Legislative Bill Review Meeting**

Jessica Kiel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M.

**II. Discussion of [SB 365 – Neighborhood Business Development Program – Food Desert Projects – Business Retention](#)**

Mary Pat Bertacchi presented the proposed position and draft letter of support for SB 365, emphasizing the clear link between food insecurity and chronic disease. The legislation expands the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development’s Neighborhood Business Development Program to support retention of healthy food retail businesses in food deserts.

Council members questioned how healthy food was defined in the bill and suggested clearer language on this may be needed. Council members discussed the possibility of a support with amendments position but concluded such a position would be untimely, given the timelines for submitting positions to Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and final testimony to the General Assembly. Council members also noted how too narrow of a definition for “healthy foods” may be problematic.

Ms. Bertacchi offered to adjust the draft letter of support text to encourage businesses to offer healthy foods as defined by the 2020 Dietary Guidelines of Americans, but without proposing amendments to the actual bill.

Mychelle Farmer, M.D., expressed her hope that small businesses could use this program to encourage fruits and vegetable consumption. Pamela Xenakis, RDN noted the negative impact dollar stores have on the food environment because of their unhealthy food offerings. Namisa Kramer stressed the importance of affordability, noting that healthy food can be expensive.

**III. Discussion of [HB 134 – Business Regulation – Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition](#)**

At Ms. Kiel’s invitation, Alexandra Nowalk, Health Policy Analyst with the Maryland Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control, briefly described HB 134 and the draft letter of support put forth by the Council’s Ad Hoc Legislative Committee. The bill is a cross file of SB 177 and a reintroduction of HB 3 as originally introduced in the 2020 Legislative Session. The legislation bars manufacture, import, or sale of flavored tobacco products in Maryland, including cigars and electronic smoking devices and menthol and mint flavored products. The legislation aims to address tobacco use disparities among

populations targeted by tobacco industry marketing, specifically African-American, Latino/Hispanic, and LGBTQ communities.

Ms. Kramer asked whether the legislation covered the menthol, mint, and cigar products which manufacturers and retailers target to African-American communities. Ms. Nowalk confirmed HB 134 would bar all sales of flavored tobacco products.

**IV. Public Comment**

There were no comments or questions from the public.

**V. SB 365 Position Vote**

Ms. Kiel called for the vote on the position of support for SB 365. Quorum was established at 21 members present; 17 members voted to approve the proposed position to support the legislation; and 4 members abstained. The motion to submit a letter of support for this bill carried.

**VI. HB 134 Position Vote**

Ms. Kiel called for the vote on the position of support for HB 134. Quorum was established at 21 members present; 15 members voted to approve the proposed position to support the legislation; and 6 members abstained. The motion to submit a letter of support for this bill carried.

**VII. Closing**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 A.M.

## COUNCIL VOTES

### **On the Motion to Approve Support for SB 365.**

#### Members Voting to Approve:

Salliann Alborn  
Mary Backley  
Mary Pat Raimondi Bertacchi  
Jonathan Dayton  
Mychelle Farmer  
Gary Gerstenblith  
Roger Harrell  
Jessica Kiel  
Linda Kline  
Julie Maneen  
Vaple Robinson  
Jason Semanoff  
Afton Thomas  
Teresa Titus-Howard  
Kristin Watson  
Vanina Wolf  
Pamela Xenakis

#### Members Voting to Abstain:

Jennifer Eastman  
Namisa Kramer  
Cameron Pollock  
Pamela Williams

**On the Motion to Approve Support for HB 134.**

Members Voting to Approve the Motion:

Salliann Alborn

Mary Backley

Mary Pat Raimondi Bertacchi

Jonathan Dayton

Mychelle Farmer

Gary Gerstenblith

Roger Harrell

Jessica Kiel

Vaple Robinson

Jason Semanoff

Afton Thomas

Teresa Titus-Howard

Kristin Watson

Vanina Wolf

Pamela Xenakis

Members Voting to Abstain:

Jennifer Eastman

Linda Kline

Namisa Kramer

Julie Maneen

Cameron Pollock

Pamela Williams