

Laundette Jones, PhD, MPH
Chesapeake C.O.H.R.D.T.
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Re: 21-0064R - Investigational Hearing - Urban Farming

Dear Madam Chair & Members of the Health, Environment & Technology Committee,

I am a Public Health Expert with a PhD in Environmental Health Sciences (Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and MPH in Community and Population Health (University of Maryland, School of Medicine.

I have found overwhelming evidence that Urban farming and gardening can be a public health strategy and a readily accessible way to boost societal resilience to disturbances, particularly during the pandemic. For example, a recent 2022 study in the Journal of Urban Forestry & Urban Greening reported that Gardens and yards have served as a lifeline during the pandemic. Specifically, they found that gardening was overwhelmingly important for nature connection, individual stress release, outdoor physical activity and food provision. The importance of economic security was also important for those facing greater hardships from the pandemic.

To extrapolate from the findings of this study and others, I strongly support Urban farming and gardening as a legitimate outdoor public health initiative that can help people to cope during a pandemic and other disruptions.

Therefore, I recommend that Urban farming and gardening should be added to Baltimore's COVID-19 pandemic control plan and barriers should be removed so that this practice can be readily accessible and available to all people for current and future societal health. With that being said, I request a favorable report on City Council Bill 21-0064R.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laundette P. Jones". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Laundette Jones, PhD, MPH