



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Welch

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - Food Safety Technology

FOR the purpose of calling on representatives from the Health Department and food safety researchers from Morgan State University to appear before the Council to discuss advances in food safety technology and how these new technologies can be used by the City to improve the health of Baltimore's citizens, ensure that food served by the City is of the highest quality, and more effectively enforce food safety laws.

Recitals

Food-borne illness is a serious health concern both worldwide and closer to home. Each year, millions of Americans are sickened by something that they ate and reports of serious food poisoning outbreaks lead to panic. Even incorrect rumors about food-borne illnesses can be devastating - for example, the misattribution of the recent deadly E. Coli outbreak in Europe to Spanish produce is reported to have caused more than \$200 million in damage to Spain's economy.

Many of these outbreaks are easily preventable if food is handled and stored properly. Clear and comprehensive records also can make it much easier to zero in on the source of a disease rapidly, and thereby reduce both the human and monetary costs of food-borne illnesses when they do occur.

Unfortunately, the widespread use of antiquated pen-and-paper monitoring and record keeping systems for food safety compliance makes it difficult to track the treatment of food from field to plate. Too often, data on food storage conditions is simply lacking, adherence to proper handling procedures by employees with many other duties cannot be verified, and the path of a particular morsel from its original producer through many levels of suppliers to its ultimate consumer is extraordinarily difficult to follow.

Right here in Baltimore, researchers at Morgan State University are working on cutting-edge technological solutions to these pressing food safety problems. In collaboration with private industry, technologies are being developed that can better monitor food storage conditions, make records difficult to falsify or misstate, ensure compliance with food safety protocols, and trace the progress of food items through the food distribution system.

These technologies have the potential to dramatically reduce the number of people falling victim to food-borne diseases while simultaneously improving efficiency in the food service industry and reducing the panic and economic harm caused by uncertainty about food poisoning outbreaks.

Baltimore must do whatever it can to be at the forefront in the adoption of these important health technologies. The City should take advantage of the pathbreaking work being done on food safety at Morgan State by partnering with researchers there on a comprehensive study of food-borne illness in Baltimore and how technology could be used to better safeguard our health. The City should also consider becoming an early adopter of emerging food safety technological tools that could immediately improve the safety of food served by City agencies, or that could be used to more effectively monitor the compliance of regulated food service establishments with current food safety laws.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls on representatives from the Health Department and food safety researchers from Morgan State University to appear before the Council to discuss advances in food safety technology and how these new technologies can be used by the City to improve the health of Baltimore's citizens, ensure that food served by the City is of the highest quality, and more effectively enforce food safety laws.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Health Commissioner, the Mayor, the President of Morgan State University, and the Mayor's legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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