



SHEPHERDS MANOR CREAMERY
1126 Slingluff Road
New Windsor, Maryland 21776

SUPPORT

My name is Michael Histon and with my wife we own the first and only Sheep Dairy in the state of Maryland producing raw and pasteurized sheep's milk cheeses. Our business has benefitted greatly by programs and grants provided through the State, our local county, Marbidco, and Grow and Fortify. Growing and sustaining our future has and will continue to be made possible by funds and loans which come from these organizations.

I write on behalf of the four associations value-added agricultural organizations we represent to urge your support of SB979.

This type of tax credit on equipment purchases would have an incredible impact on the value-added agricultural businesses, who rely on specialized equipment to craft their innovated, and sometimes, farm-preserving products.

The impact to small businesses is enormous, and the revenue generation to the state is exponentially greater than its investment in this program, as value-added products yield incredibly greater tax revenue than traditional farm products.

In a study recently released by Grow & Fortify, value-added agriculture was shown to contribute \$875 million annually to the state's economy.

We urge your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael E. Histon".

Michael E. Histon