



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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February 20, 2020

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: Support of HB 395 - Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Use of Proceeds for Maryland Healthy Soils Program

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 395, legislation that would add the Maryland Healthy Soils Program to what is considered climate change and resiliency programs within the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund. In addition, this bill would dedicate 10% or \$1,000,000 of the fund to be used for the Maryland Healthy Soils Program to help meet the air quality goals outlined in the statute and in Maryland's 40 by 30 Regional Greenhouse Gas goals.

Carbon sequestration from production agriculture has proven to greatly reduce the greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. Healthy soils practices like cover crops, no-till farming, rotational grazing and conservation tillage greatly increase the removal of greenhouse gasses. Increasing these practices in Maryland will help lessen climate volatility in the region. Healthy soils programs are a key part of Maryland's regional greenhouse gas reduction goals. Data collected that compares Maryland's current healthy soils practices to the State's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) finds that over the last 10 years, Maryland's healthy soils practices have reduced the amount of GHG by 6.14 mmt compared to 3.6 mmt for RGGI over the same timeframe.

Asking farmers to do more with less, and with no assistance, makes it very difficult for farmers to afford to participate. This bill addresses the funding deficiencies needed to create a robust program that will help all of Maryland.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 395 AND ENCOURAGES A FAVORABLE REPORT.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

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