



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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March 3, 2020

To: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of SB 986 - Public Schools – Agricultural Education and Grant Programs**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 986, legislation that defines a Certified Ag Education program in Maryland public schools and requires local school programs to adopt and use this definition in their existing Ag education programs or when they are creating new Ag education programs. Each local board of education is required to implement an agricultural education program that prepares students for:

(1) successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices relating to global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems; and (2) a wide range of opportunities in agriculture–related employment and higher education by providing instruction and developing skills in science, math, technology, communications, leadership, and management through integrated: (i) classroom and laboratory instruction relating to agriculture, food, and natural resources; (ii) supervised agricultural experiences (SAE), which may include service or work–based learning; and (iii) leadership experiences and involvement in student organizations with an agricultural focus (FFA).

In addition, the department may award grants to county boards, nonprofit organizations, and other entities to compensate teachers for working extra duty days to enable students to participate in agricultural education programs and activities; provide funding for students who are enrolled in agricultural education courses to pay dues and participate in the Maryland FFA association; provide teacher development and training, including attendance at summer training conferences; and maintain existing agricultural education programs and implement new department–approved agricultural education programs in public schools in the state. The bill requires the governor to include an appropriation of \$785,000 to the program each fiscal year starting in fiscal year 2022.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 986

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