

March 15, 2022

The Honorable Senator Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Senate Education, Health &  
Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Senate Miller Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**SB 942 Agriculture - Urban Agriculture Water and Power Infrastructure Grant Program  
and Fund- Establishment**

Dear Chair Pinsky:

I writing to ask you to vote in favor of SB942 Agriculture - Urban Agriculture Water and Power Infrastructure Grant Program and Fund- Establishment

I ask for your support for this bill for three reasons. The first reason being that the purpose of this bill is to increase the viability of urban farming and community gardens to improve access to urban-grown foods. This is important because food deserts disproportionately impact urban cities in Maryland. The bill would establish the grant program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the grant itself would cover equipment costs associated with water supply and irrigation, as well as electric power access.

The second reason is because agriculture has been declining over the years, and the costs associated with farming is a large reason why. The grant established in the bill will cover 87.5% of the costs associated with the installation of the farming equipment. This includes water meters, water pipes, irrigation hoses, electric meters, and electrical lines. In doing so, farmers would be incentivized to farm in urban areas, decreasing the amount of food deserts in Maryland.

The last reason I ask you to vote favorably for this bill is because grants similar to this one have been provided in the past and are proven to work. In 2014, MARBIDCO established the Maryland Urban Agriculture Commercial Lending Incentive Grant. SB942 will give urban agricultural producers the tools they need to succeed in urban farm settings. An “urban agricultural producer” is someone who annually sells or would have sold at least \$1,000 worth of farm products in an urban area of Maryland. Some of the farm products include fresh vegetables and fruits, livestock, nuts, honey, and wool. Just about anything grown or raised on a farm or garden in an urban area Maryland counts.

Once again, I ask you to vote in support of SB942.

Sincerely,

*Geena Michaelides*

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