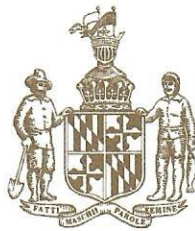


TODD B. MORGAN
Legislative District 29C
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 215
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3319 · 301-858-3319
800-492-7122 Ext. 3319
Todd.Morgan@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15, 2023

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

**HB389: Department of Agriculture – State Ombudsman for Value-Added Agriculture –
Favorable with Amendments**

Mr. Chairman, and members of the ENT Committee:

I ask you today for a favorable vote of HB389. This bill is cross-filed with Senator Hester as SB34 and has just been passed out the Senate.

As many of you know, or may not know, Value added Agriculture is a big business which is growing ever bigger in Maryland. It supports about 74,000 jobs with an economic impact of about \$2.6 billion annually. The state benefits from this with \$875 million in revenue.

Value-Added Agriculture (VAA) has been defined as altering a raw agricultural product in a way to increase its worth to the consumer, which brings more revenue to the farmer, producer, or processor. My simplest way to explain it is to ask you to bring to mind an agriculture item which has been transformed into different product, and then sold to bring income to the farmer.

An example or two might be:

- For meats, instead of ribs and tenderloin, the meats are turned into sausages, salami, or something you might find on a charcutier board.

- For Fruits, those that aren't pretty you make jellies or pies.
- For dairy, think of yogurt, ice cream, etc.

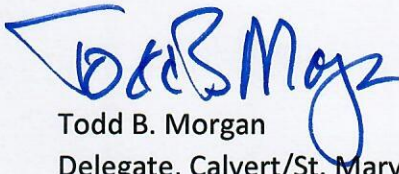
In Southern Maryland, we are in the process of building our Regional Agricultural Center for these added value products. I have worked for several years with the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission to navigate the federal and state regulatory process which can be overwhelming and confusing. Having a Specialist within the department to help navigate this process and be the point of contact for added value agriculture would be a huge benefit to the farming and small business community.

I have submitted two amendments for consideration, which conform the bill to its current Senate status. The amendments:

- Change the position from Ombudsmen to Specialist
- Add livestock and agricultural services to the list of valued-added activities

I ask for your support and favorable report for this bill with the amendments. Thank you and are there any questions.

Sincerely,



Todd B. Morgan
Delegate, Calvert/St. Mary's Counties (29C)