



Maryland Farm Bureau

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February 13th, 2024

To: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Support of SB0589 -Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission – Funding

On behalf of the nearly 9,500 Farm Bureau families in Maryland, I am writing in support of SB0589. This bill aims to increase the appropriation for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), which is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, from the Cigarette Restitution Fund.

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission plays a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, and fostering sustainable practices. This bill asks that SMADC receive at least \$1 million annually or up to the original 5% of the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF). The CRF fund is continual and non-lapsing and the only place that money can go is to the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. SMADC requests an increase in the share of the CRF so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community. It is worth noting that last fiscal year, with just their \$900,000 in base funding, SMADC was able to leverage that to bring in over \$3 million additional dollars in grants. SMADC and the farmers they serve are a proven worthwhile return on investment. Funding is an important element of Maryland Agriculture that needs to be promoted and preserved.

MDFB Policy: We support the State of Maryland increasing funding to the Tri-County Councils for the purpose of including and funding agricultural and natural resources development in their mission.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB0589

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough", written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough at (443) 878-4045 with any questions