



## POSITION STATEMENT

### Support of SB 0589 - Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland – Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission – Funding

Budget and Taxation Committee

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Shelby Watson-Hampton, Director, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

As Director of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, I am urging members of the committee to support SB0589 and the ask for permanent (and slightly increased) funding for the commission; as SMADC plays a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding SMADC is seeking, it's current existing funding that comes into the state every year from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF), of which 5% was promised to SMADC twenty years ago upon their creation during the Tobacco Buyout.** Despite what was written at that time, SMADC has consistently gotten less than that, and has been existing off only \$900,000 a year from that fund.

This bill asks that SMADC receive at least \$1 million annually or up to the original 5% of the CRF as promised, in perpetuity.

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and the only place that money can go is to the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets over \$30 million a year from this fund alone, plus their additional funding. SMADC just requests their fair 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.

The proposed increase in funding to at least \$1,000,000 is essential for supporting the agricultural economy, small business innovation, and food and farming education. It is worth noting that last fiscal year, with just our \$900,000 in base funding, SMADC was able to leverage that to bring in over \$3 million additional dollars in grants to the region.

**SMADC's success is proven. In FY23 alone we awarded 22 farm mini grants totaling \$37,950, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$15,052, awarded \$14,500 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, awarded \$93,238 in equipment grants, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720**

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission  
is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland  
P.O. Box 745 Hughesville, MD 20637  
Phone - 240-528-8850 ~ Email – info@smadc.com





**farmers/producers, directly served 454 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.**

The proposed increase in appropriation from \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 will provide the necessary resources for the Commission to expand its initiatives and contribute to the economic vitality of our region. Additionally, the repeal of the termination of certain provisions of law related to the annual budget bill appropriation is a positive step toward ensuring consistent and reliable funding for the Commission's ongoing activities. SMADC and the farmers they serve are a proven worthwhile return on investment.

I urge you to support SB 0589 to contribute to the sustained growth and prosperity agriculture in Southern Maryland and statewide.

**Please also see the numerous letters of support from farmers and agricultural community members attached below.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Shelby Watson-Hampton*

**Shelby Watson-Hampton**

Director, Southern Maryland Agricultural  
Development Commission (SMADC)  
[swatsonhampton@smadc.com](mailto:swatsonhampton@smadc.com)  
[www.smadc.com](http://www.smadc.com)  
(240) 304-8535

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P.O. Box 745 Hughesville, MD 20637  
Phone - 240-528-8850 ~ Email – [info@smadc.com](mailto:info@smadc.com)



# SMADC is valuable to Maryland



SMADC serves

**2,011 FARMS &  
205,000 ACRES**

in the five-county Southern Maryland area and  
additional programming available statewide



## SMADC'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN FY'23



**454 FARMS**

directly benefited from SMADC  
marketing, resources, and events.



**22 Farms Awarded  
SMADC Mini Grants  
totaling \$37,950**



**\$15,052**

awarded through SMADC  
scholarships & sponsorships



**\$14,500**

awarded to regional youth through  
Southern Maryland Meats sponsorships



**\$93,238**

awarded through SMADC  
equipment grants



**99,600**

consumers engaged  
SMADC.com

**74,800**

views reached SMADC  
Facebook



**13** SMADC workshops  
& events



**\$29,000**

awarded through SMADC/MARBIDCO  
loan funds

**+ 1,000** attended the  
Buy Local Challenge Celebration



By leveraging our annual allotment of \$900,000 in base funding, SMADC secured partnerships and projects, bringing an additional 3 million dollars (in both state and non-state grand funds) dedicated to ag. programs that enhance the region's economic viability.



Infrastructure: Regional Agriculture Center in progress - total funds secured

**\$5,700,000**

(SMADC & St. Mary's County)

**MARYLAND MARKET MONEY**



**60+ FARMERS ACCESS POINTS**

including 26 So. MD locations



**\$1,033,053**

awarded to MMM program

**\$389,219**



Federal Nutrition Benefit matching incentive funds granted to participating farmers markets, farm stands, & CSAs statewide



**720+**

raw agricultural producers (farmers, ranchers, watermen) & local food producers participated

**BOTTOM LINE - SMADC IS GOOD FOR MARYLAND STATEWIDE**

**SMADC is dedicated to...**



a division of the



- *cultivating a dynamic food system that is profitable for farmers and producers, empowering for communities, and environmentally sound.*
- *Enhancing the quality of life of all community members through market driven & sustainable farming, & environmental stewardship*
- *Developing infrastructure that supports regional food systems where all members of the community can thrive*

SMADC PROJECTS ARE **STRONG ECONOMIC MULTIPLIERS**. FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW SMADC IS SUPPORTING FARMS, FARMERS & AND THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND AND BEYOND.

VISIT [SMADC.COM](http://SMADC.COM) OR CONNECT WITH US   



Prince George's County Farm Bureau, Inc.  
13501 Molly Berry Road  
Brandywine, Maryland 20613  
Email: PGCFB@yahoo.com  
Phone# 301.579.6552

February 10, 2024

**Testimony in Support of SB 0589 - Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland – Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission – Funding**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

My name is Daniel A. Donohue; I am the Vice President of the Prince George's County Farm Bureau, Inc. (PGCFB) and am representing PGCFB regarding this proposed legislation. PGCFB strongly supports Senate Bill 0589, which 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.

It is important to note that this is not new funding they are seeking, it's current existing funding that comes into the state every year from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF), of which 5% was promised to SMADC twenty years ago upon their creation during the Tobacco Buyout. Despite what was written at that time, SMADC has consistently gotten less than that, and has been operating on only \$900,000 a year from that fund.

This bill asks that SMADC receive at least \$1 million annually or up to the original 5% of the CRF as promised, in perpetuity.

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. The Health Department gets over \$30 million a year from this fund alone, plus their additional funding. SMADC just requests their fair 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.

The proposed increase in funding to at least \$1,000,000 is essential for the following reasons:

**Supporting Agricultural Innovation:** The additional funds will enable the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission to invest in innovative initiatives that benefit local farmers, promote sustainable practices, and enhance overall agricultural productivity.

**Economic Impact:** Agriculture is a cornerstone of our local economy, and increased funding will positively impact the financial well-being of our farmers, contributing to the economic vitality of Southern Maryland.

**Educational Programs:** The Commission plays a vital role in educating our community about the importance of agriculture. The increased funding will allow for expanded educational programs, ensuring that residents are informed about the value of sustainable farming practices.

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.

PGCFB supports the many initiatives that SMADC has offered to producers in Prince George's County and the entire Southern Maryland region. SMADC's working with the Anne Arundel County government this past year enabled the Lothian Grain Elevator to continue operations to support grain farmers in Southern Maryland; this was a big win for the farmers and the local economy. The loan program that SMADC offers has helped many producers purchase equipment to enhance their operations and increase profitability.

PGCFB enthusiastically supports the proposed increase in appropriation from \$900,000 to \$1,000,000, as it will provide the necessary resources for the Commission to expand its initiatives and contribute to the economic vitality of our region. Additionally, the repeal of the termination of certain provisions of law related to the annual budget bill appropriation is a very positive step toward ensuring consistent and reliable funding for the Commission's ongoing activities.

PGCFB asks you to please support SB 0589 to contribute to the sustained growth and prosperity of agriculture in Southern Maryland and statewide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, .



Daniel A. Donohue  
Vice President, Prince George's County Farm Bureau, Inc.



**CALVERT COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

175 Main Street  
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678  
410-535-1600 • 301-855-1243  
www.calvertcountymd.gov

*Board of Commissioners*  
Mark C. Cox Sr.  
Catherine M. Grasso  
Earl F. Hance  
Mike Hart  
Todd Ireland

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Delegate Marc Korman, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB812 – Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission - Funding

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Committee Members:

The Board of County Commissioners for Calvert County writes in **SUPPORT** of **HB812** and requests a **FAVORABLE** Committee report. This Bill supports the transition from tobacco farming with a modest increase in appropriation for the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (Council) from the Cigarette Restitution Fund. By existing law, the Council must use funds appropriated from the Cigarette Restitution Fund for the purpose of funding the activities of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC).

As you are aware, the Council is an integral part of our community, and SMADC, under its purview, plays a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, and fostering sustainable practices. SMADC provides valuable services to Calvert County farmers and citizens including mini-grants, workshops, Maryland Market Money – a funding match up to \$30 per day for citizens purchasing food at farmers markets and farm stands with nutrition assistance benefits programs, along with consumer guides for customers to learn more about local food options.

Your thoughtful consideration of this request is sincerely appreciated. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact County Administrator Julian M. Willis at 410-535-1600 extension 2202 or Economic Development Director Julie Oberg at 410-535-1600 extension 2485.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND

\_\_\_\_\_  
Earl F. Hance, President

*Catherine M. Grasso*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Catherine M. Grasso, Vice President

*Mark C. Cox Sr.*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark C. Cox Sr.

*Mike Hart*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Hart

*Todd Ireland*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Ireland

cc: Calvert County Delegation



**CALVERT COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

175 Main Street  
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678  
410-535-1600 • 301-855-1243  
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*Board of Commissioners*  
Mark C. Cox Sr.  
Catherine M. Grasso  
Earl F. Hance  
Mike Hart  
Todd Ireland

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair  
Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB589 – Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission - Funding

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members:

The Board of County Commissioners for Calvert County writes in **SUPPORT** of **SB589** and requests a **FAVORABLE** Committee report. This Bill supports the transition from tobacco farming with a modest increase in appropriation for the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (Council) from the Cigarette Restitution Fund. By existing law, the Council must use funds appropriated from the Cigarette Restitution Fund for the purpose of funding the activities of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC).

As you are aware, the Council is an integral part of our community, and SMADC, under its purview, plays a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, and fostering sustainable practices. SMADC provides valuable services to Calvert County farmers and citizens including mini-grants, workshops, Maryland Market Money – a funding match up to \$30 per day for citizens purchasing food at farmers markets and farm stands with nutrition assistance benefits programs, along with consumer guides for customers to learn more about local food options.

Your thoughtful consideration of this request is sincerely appreciated. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact County Administrator Julian M. Willis at 410-535-1600 extension 2202 or Economic Development Director Julie Oberg at 410-535-1600 extension 2485.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND

\_\_\_\_\_  
Earl F. Hance, President

*Catherine M. Grasso*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Catherine M. Grasso, Vice President

*Mark C. Cox Sr.*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark C. Cox Sr.

*Mike Hart*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Hart

*Todd Ireland*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Ireland

cc: Calvert County Delegation





# CHARLES SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Organized 1941

4200 Gardiner Road  
Waldorf, MD 20601  
(301) 638-3028

February 9, 2024

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
c/o Senator Guy Guzzone, Chairman  
3 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 0589 - Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland – Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission – Funding

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

The Charles Soil Conservation District strongly supports Senate Bill 0589, which aims to increase the appropriation for the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland from the Cigarette Restitution Fund. This amendment is crucial for the continued success and growth of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission.

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland is an integral part of our community. The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), under its purview, plays a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, and fostering sustainable practices.

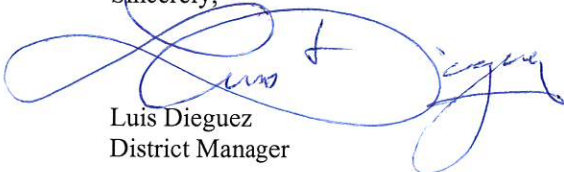
Through the support of SMADC, the Charles Soil Conservation District has been able to make agricultural equipment easily available for rent to the southern Maryland agricultural community. This has enabled farmers to carry out soil conservation related work for the betterment of our farmland and overall environment. SMADC has been an active partner in promoting agricultural education in our region.

The proposed increase in appropriation from \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 will provide the necessary resources for the Commission to expand its initiatives and contribute to the economic vitality of our region. Additionally, the repeal of the termination of certain provisions of law related to the annual budget bill appropriation is a positive step toward ensuring consistent and reliable funding for the Commission's ongoing activities.

We urge you to support SB 0589 to contribute to the sustained growth and prosperity of agriculture in Southern Maryland and statewide.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Luis Dieguez  
District Manager



**POSITION STATEMENT**

**Support of SB 0589 - Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland – Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission – Funding**

Budget and Taxation Committee  
February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo - Jay Farrell, Chairman**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support this bill for SMADC funding.

Over the past 17 years SMADC has been a major sponsor for our educational youth livestock show. In addition to the show itself, educational and youth development events are held to foster camaraderie and enhance their knowledge and love of the area's agricultural heritage, and SMADC's grant has annually provided us with funding to make our show possible. Through their support and other sponsors, our show has continued to grow and expand: at our first show in 2006, we registered 65 participants and 264 animals, whereas our show in 2023 had grown to 104 participants registered and 314 animals. Many of the exhibitors that attend this event are not able to travel to other states and areas to compete in shows. It is a local event to educate those that may not be able to afford the travel expenses or choose not to leave Southern Maryland.

We request that you continue the funding to SMADC so they may continue to provide financial support to our show, making it easily accessible to those youth that need a show of this caliber. This venue enhances their knowledge of livestock and the responsibility it takes to raise and exhibit their own livestock regardless of the species – cattle, swine, lamb, goat, and rabbits. As a result of the funding from SMADC and other sponsors we have been able to expand our show to a younger group of children to include Peewee and Novice classes; our age groups range from 4 to 21 years old. We consistently receive positive comments, and the camaraderie and lessons are things the children will remember forever.

I would like to thank SMADC for their past support and look forward to their future support. With your help in securing the funding from SMADC, this will remain possible.

Thank you,

Jay Farrell

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission  
is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland  
P.O. Box 745 Hughesville, MD 20637  
Phone - 240-528-8850 ~ Email – info@smadc.com





# Maryland Forests Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 332

Linkwood, MD 21835

410-463-1755

*Maryland's voice for forest, wildlife, and natural resource management*

February 12, 2023

The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair  
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe, Vice-Chair  
Maryland Budget & Taxation Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB589- Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland- Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission- Funding

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Forests Association (MFA) supports the passage of SB589

Maryland Forests Association, Inc. (MFA) is a non-profit 501 c(3) membership-driven organization established in 1976. We represent the entire forest community statewide. Our membership encompasses people that live, work, and play in the forest. MFA envisions a future in which vibrant forests are maintained throughout the State, providing diverse economic and environmental benefits to all. The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission is vital to supporting local tree farmers, promoting forestry education, and promoting sustainable practices.

It is important to note that this is not new funding they are seeking. Current existing funding comes into the State every year from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF), of which 5% was promised to SMADC twenty years ago upon their creation during the Tobacco Buyout. Despite what was written then, SMADC has consistently gotten less than that and has been existing off only \$900,000 yearly from that fund.

This bill asks that SMADC receive at least \$1 million annually or up to the original 5% of the CRF as promised, in perpetuity.

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. The Health Department gets over \$30 million annually from this fund alone, plus their additional funding. SMADC requests their fair share of the CRF so they can continue supporting the farmers in their region and across the State who are growing healthy food, sustainable fiber, and a healthy community.

The proposed increase in funding to at least \$1,000,000 is essential for the following reasons:

**Supporting Agricultural Innovation:** The additional funds will enable the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission to invest in innovative initiatives that benefit local farmers, promote sustainable practices, and enhance agricultural productivity.

**Economic Impact:** Agriculture and Forestry are cornerstones of the local economy, and increased funding will positively impact the financial well-being of our farmers, contributing to the economic vitality of Southern Maryland.

**Educational Programs:** The Commission plays a vital role in educating the community about the importance of agriculture. The increased funding will allow for expanded educational programs, ensuring residents are informed about the value of sustainable practices.

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. Over the past several years, they have assisted our organization with educational projects, tours, and literature that have all led to a better understanding of the forestry sector.

I am in favor of the proposed increase in appropriation from \$900,000 to \$1,000,000, as it will provide the necessary resources for the Commission to expand its initiatives and contribute to the economic vitality of our region. Additionally, the repeal of the termination of certain provisions of law related to the annual budget bill appropriation is a positive step toward ensuring consistent and reliable funding for the Commission's ongoing activities.

I urge you to support SB589 to contribute to the sustained growth and prosperity in forestry in Southern Maryland and statewide.

In closing, our organization relies heavily on regional partners as part of our education and outreach projects that keep our forests healthy and productive. For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB589. Thank you, and please feel free to contact me, Beth Hill, at 410-463-1755 or via email at [beth@mdforests.org](mailto:beth@mdforests.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "E. Hill".

Elizabeth D. Hill  
Executive Director  
Maryland Forests Association





## La Plata Farmers Market

Kelly Phipps  
305 Queen Anne St  
La Plata MD 20646  
[khipps@townoflaplata.org](mailto:khipps@townoflaplata.org)  
301-966-7473

**Subject:** Testimony In Support of SB 0589 - Tri-County Council For Southern Maryland –  
Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission – Funding

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 0589, which aims to increase the appropriation for the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland from the Cigarette Restitution fund. The proposal to raise the annual appropriation from \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 is a crucial step in fostering the sustainable growth of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC).

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland plays a pivotal role in our community's development, and the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission, under its umbrella, contributes significantly to the prosperity of our region's agricultural sector.

With SMADC's direct support, the La Plata Farmers Market has evolved from a small, sparsely attended gathering to a regional small business incubator and tourist destination celebrating Southern Maryland's agricultural heritage. Since integrating the Maryland Market Money program, our market has increased the reach of our local small businesses to include underserved communities, providing these food-insecure populations more equitable access to locally produced goods with higher nutritional content. Moreover, our market has embraced the historical image of a market as a community gathering space that fosters partnerships among farmers, agriculturalists, consumers, and the business community.

The proposed increase in funding to \$1,000,000 is essential for the following reasons:

- **Supporting Agricultural Innovation:** The additional funds will enable the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission to invest in innovative initiatives that benefit local farmers, promote sustainable practices, and enhance overall agricultural productivity.
- **Economic Impact:** Agriculture is a cornerstone of our local economy, and increased funding will positively impact the financial well-being of our farmers, contributing to the economic vitality of Southern Maryland.



- **Educational Programs:** The Commission plays a vital role in educating our community about the importance of agriculture. The increased funding will allow for expanded educational programs, ensuring that residents are informed about the value of sustainable farming practices.

I also commend the initiative to repeal the termination of certain provisions of law, ensuring consistent and uninterrupted support for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission. This stability is crucial for planning and executing long-term projects that benefit our community.

In conclusion, I urge you to support SB 0589 and contribute to the continued growth and success of Southern Maryland's agricultural sector. This investment is not just in the Commission but in the well-being of our community as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your dedication to the betterment of our community.

Sincerely,  
Kelly Phipps  
Market Manager  
La Plata Farmers Market