



Maryland Farm Bureau

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January 28, 2025

To: Senate Finance Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support of SB226 Maryland Farms and Families Fund – Purpose and Use – Alterations.**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in support of SB226 Maryland Farms and Families Fund – Purpose and Use – Alterations. This bill will make alterations to the Maryland Farms and Families Fund to match purchases made with FMNP, SNAP, and WIC benefits at participating farmers markets and farm stands and provide logistical and marketing support to Non-Profit Farmers Markets to increase use of these programs.

Farmers markets provide immense value not only to the agricultural producers who participate in them but also to the communities they serve. They create vital opportunities for residents to access fresh, locally sourced produce, meats, dairy products, and other goods while fostering direct connections between consumers and producers. These markets serve as hubs for economic activity, creating jobs and supporting local economies. Additionally, farmers markets strengthen community bonds, offering spaces for social interaction, education, and the celebration of local culture. For farmers, these markets provide critical direct-to-consumer sales opportunities, ensuring they receive a fair price for their goods while gaining valuable feedback from customers. The opportunity for farmers markets around the state to increase their use of federal nutrition programs will only further the accessibility of quality, local food for all.

Maryland Farm Bureau supports SB226 the Maryland Farms and Families Fund– Purpose and Use – Alterations and respectfully asks for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

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

Director of Government Relations

Please Contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions