

# **CBF Budget Fact Sheet.pdf**

Uploaded by: Allison Colden

Position: FAV

# FIGHTING FOR A BAY-FOCUSED BUDGET

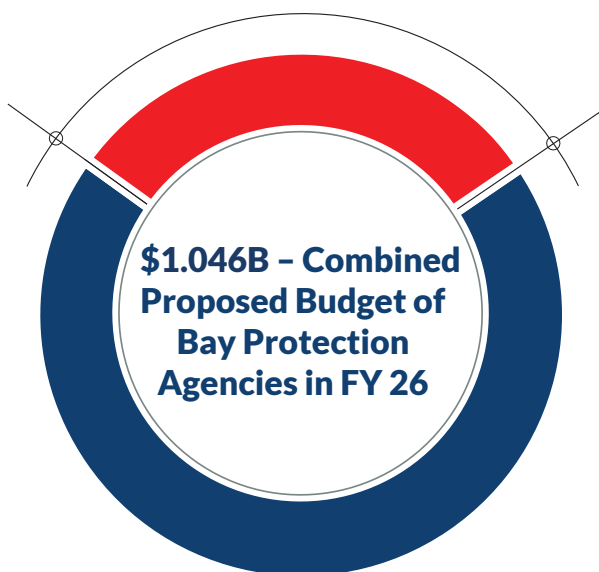
**We know that investments in clean water and air are investments in Marylanders**—our health, our jobs, and our ways of life. State investments in wastewater treatment, agricultural buffers, green infrastructure, and oyster restoration have paid dividends and help grow Maryland's economy. **Without sustained efforts we risk backsliding.**

## Support Governor Moore's environmental budget and support revenue measures that hold polluters accountable.

The Departments of the Environment (MDE), Natural Resources (DNR), and Agriculture (MDA) and the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA)—the state agencies tasked with protecting the Bay—are **already making significant contributions to balancing the budget.**

While those agencies have a combined proposed budget of **\$1.046 billion in FY 26**, they are slated to collectively contribute well over **\$255.4 million to deficit reduction** in the Governor's budget plan.

**\$255M – Contribution to  
Deficit Reduction**



**\$1.046B – Combined  
Proposed Budget of  
Bay Protection  
Agencies in FY 26**



MONICA HAWSE

## Protecting The Bay Grows Maryland's Economy

- Fully funding farm pollution-reduction programs would inject **\$655 million annually into the region's economy**.<sup>1</sup>
- The Maryland Agricultural Cost Share Program (MACS) **returns \$1.75 for every dollar spent**, spurs additional **private investment** in conservation practices, and supports increased sales and earnings for **local businesses and workers**.
- Maryland's seafood industry contributes nearly **\$600 million to the state's economy annually**.<sup>2</sup>
- Clean air and water **reduce health expenditures, which cost the U.S. economy more than \$80 billion annually**.<sup>3</sup>

1 [Agricultural Conservation Practices: Clean Water and Climate Smart Investments](#), CBF 2022.

2 <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/seafoodp.html>

3 <https://www.ajmc.com/view/cdc-study-puts-economic-burden-of-asthma-at-more-than-80-billion-per-year>





WILL PARSON/CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

## Protect Key Bay Restoration Programs

- **The Bay Restoration Fund** supports upgrades to Maryland's wastewater treatment plants, septic system replacements and upgrades, and other programs that produce tangible improvements to water quality. *Oversubscribing or diverting funds from the BRF risks slowing down these investments or leaving insufficient resources to deal with emergencies that can undo years of progress.*
- **The Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund** directly supports Maryland's progress in addressing nonpoint source pollution in all regions of the state and is critical in funding agricultural practices that reduce nutrient runoff into local waterways. *Diversion of these funds jeopardizes our progress in addressing agricultural runoff, the largest source of nutrient pollution into the Bay.*
- **Program Open Space (POS)** supports Maryland meeting our land-preservation and forest-retention goals through the targeted acquisition of properties in every corner of the state. *POS is already under strain after a period of transfer tax revenue under attainment and further borrowing could undermine the program.*
- **The Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF)** supports the achievement of Maryland's clean-energy goals and funds vital climate-resiliency measures. *The FY26 Governor's budget uses SEIF funds to maintain crucial Bay programs at MDE, DNR, and other agencies.*

## Advance Revenue Measures that Support Bay Restoration

The Governor and General Assembly cannot rely on program and service cuts alone to balance the budget and close the structural deficit.

CBF supports targeted revenue-raising legislation that would hold polluters accountable for the costs of mitigation and align user fees with the needs of key service programs:

- **HB 1088 / SB 882**—Coal Transportation Fee and Fossil Fuel Mitigation Fund
- **HB 902 / SB 425**—Coal Ash Cleanup and Accountability Act
- **HB 128 / SB 149**—The RENEW Act
- **HB 340**—Empowering the Attorney General to hold fossil fuel companies accountable for damages from climate change
- **SB 250**—MDE Fees, Penalties, Funding, and Regulation
- **HB 719**—DNR State Boat Act-Alterations
- **HB 40 / SB 258**—DNR Fishing Licenses and Stamps-Alterations

For more information, contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney ([mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org)).



# **Rec Boat and Fish Associations - BRFA - WIF Suppor**

Uploaded by: Allison Colden

Position: FAV





February 24, 2025

**Delegate Benjamin S. Barnes**

Chair, Appropriations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
House Office Building, Room 121  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Delegate Mark S. Chang**

Vice Chair, Appropriations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
House Office Building, Room 426  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Written Testimony – Budget for Waterway Improvement Fund**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Member of the House Committee on Appropriations:

The undersigned organizations, which represent the nation's recreational boating and fishing industries, write today in opposition to the recommendation from the Department of Legislative Services to divert funds from the Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF) to the General Fund. Diverting WIF funds to the General Fund would hamstring the DNR's ability to fund important projects that ultimately support the state's recreational fishing and boating economy and allow Maryland residents and visitors access to Maryland's diverse natural resources. Instead, we ask that the Committee support Governor Moore's proposed budget for the Department of Natural Resources operating budget.

The Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA) is the leading trade association of North American small businesses that sell and service new and pre-owned recreational boats and operate marinas, boatyards, and accessory stores. MRAA represents more than 1,300 individual member retail locations and conducts advocacy efforts on their behalf, including 20 members located in Maryland.

The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) is the premier trade association for the U.S. recreational boating industry, representing nearly 1,300 marine businesses, including recreational boat, marine engine, and accessory manufacturers. NMMA members collectively manufacture more than 85 percent of the marine products sold in the U.S. Furthermore, the recreational boating industry has a \$230 billion impact on the nation's economy and in communities across the country, with 812,000 American jobs across 36,000 U.S.-based marine businesses. Approximately 93% of U.S. boat builders are small businesses.

The Association of Marina Industries (AMI) is a North American trade association dedicated to the marina and boatyard industry. We have over 1300 members throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean—over 1 million boaters in the U.S. access water through our member marinas.

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) represents the nation's recreational fishing trade group, including manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, and angler advocacy groups. ASA also advocates for America's 57.7 million recreational anglers and supports the social, economic, and conservation benefits of sportfishing, which contributes \$148 billion annually to the U.S. economy.

The Coastal Conservation Association Maryland is a state chapter of a nationwide membership non-profit organization focused on advising and educating the public on the conservation of marine resources and ensuring the health and conservation of our marine resources and anglers' access to them.

Maryland is home to the Chesapeake Bay, 3,190 miles of coastline, more than 100 lakes, and over 16,000 miles of freshwater streams. Simply put, recreational boating is part of the Old Line State's history and heritage. It is also a major economic contributor throughout the state, generating \$4.2 billion in annual economic impact. Furthermore, a strong recreational boating culture fuels a workforce of more than 16,000 people at over 1,000 businesses. It is safe to say that in Maryland, boating means business.

Maryland's strong recreational boating and fishing economy is not just supported by the myriads of sport-fish species and recreational boating and angling opportunities located throughout the state, but by the important work done by the Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF) which facilitates access, maintains boat ramps, and much more. First established in 1966, the WIF was created to fund projects that improve and promote the recreational and commercial capabilities, conditions, and safety of Maryland's waterways for the benefit of the boating public. The WIF is funded primarily from a one-time 5% excise tax that is paid to Maryland when a boat is purchased and titled in the state, along with a portion of the state fuel tax attributed to motorized vessel usage.

Since its creation, the WIF has been used to construct and maintain more than 400 public boating facilities and 250 public navigation channels. These funds, generated by recreational boaters who are choosing to invest in Maryland's outdoor recreation economy, should not be raided by the General Assembly and diverted to the General Fund, as they are necessary to not only keep recreational boaters safe on the water, but are imperative for the continued growth of Maryland's recreational boating and fishing industry.

The WIF program is carefully administered by the Department of Natural Resources Center for Waterway Improvement and Infrastructure Program of the Chesapeake and Coastal Service Unit. WIF funds are disbursed primarily through grants and loans for a wide variety of capital projects and services for the boating public, including:

- A. Marking of channels and harbors and establishing aids to navigation.

- B. Clearing of debris and obstructions from navigable waters of the state.
- C. Dredging channels and harbors, and constructing jetties and breakwaters, including those projects in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- D. Design and construction of dredge material placement (DMP) or beneficial use (BU) sites that are necessary for dredging projects funded with WIF.
- E. Construction, renovation and maintenance of marine facilities beneficial to the general boating public.
- F. Installation of marine sewage pump-out stations.
- G. Improvement, reconstruction, or removal of bridges, drawbridges, or similar structures. or across water if those structures delay, impede, or obstruct the boating public.
- H. Evaluation of water-oriented recreation needs and capacities of Maryland waterways and the development of comprehensive plans for waterway improvement projects.
- I. Boating information and education.
- J. Construction of marine facilities for marine firefighting/policing or for the acquisition of vessels and equipment for marine firefighting/policing and communication equipment to promote safety of life and property and general service to the boating public.
- K. Acquisition of State equipment and vessels for marine firefighting, policing, first aid and medical assistance, and communications, to promote safety of life and property and general service to the boating public.
- L. Boating related structural and non-structural shore erosion control projects.<sup>1</sup>

The WIF fund is not only imperative for recreational boaters and anglers, but local communities throughout Maryland rely on WIF funds in order see projects through to completion given limited funds at a local level. Spanning from projects to support new and improved public boating access facilities, to the dredging of navigable public waterways, to emergency vessels and equipment for local first responders, the WIF provides critical funding throughout Maryland and cannot simply be diverted. Specifically, projects approved for the 2025 Fiscal Year include \$22,500 for the Baltimore City Fire Department to acquire a new shallow water safety vessel, \$175,000 to the City of Annapolis for Public Boating Access Improvements, and \$1.156 million for statewide emergency dredging, navigation, and facility needs.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, a recently considered bill, HB0719, proposed to make improvements to the Waterway Improvement Fund, amending the program to allow up to \$1 million for projects benefiting the general boating public. This enhanced access to Maryland's fresh and saltwater resources will create new opportunities for recreational boaters and strengthen the state's recreational boating and fishing economy, where access remains a key limiting factor. Should the Appropriations Committee choose to raid the WIF and divert these funds, it will take years before these improvements can make a meaningful impact on communities throughout Maryland.

Diversion of these funds will negatively impact recreational anglers and boaters in Maryland and will hamstring local communities' ability to undertake these projects, which are usually capital

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<sup>1</sup> [https://dnr.maryland.gov/boating/Documents/WIF\\_Program\\_Manual.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/boating/Documents/WIF_Program_Manual.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2024/07/24/record-21-5-million-in-maryland-waterway-improvement-fund-awards-go-to-public-boating-access-navigable-waterways-and-safety/>

intensive. Barring communities from these funds will ultimately have a negative impact on their local businesses, which rely on recreational boaters and anglers, as lackluster facilities, improperly marked channels, and the lack of the correct aids to navigation will ultimately create an unsafe boating environment, and result in less recreational boaters and anglers from visiting those communities and their natural resources.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to reject the recommendation made by the Department of Legislative Services to divert money from the Waterway Improvement Fund and to instead leave these funds unmolested. As money generated by recreational boaters, the undersigned organizations hold that it should remain to be used for the boating public, as continued investment is the only way to ensure continued growth of Maryland's recreational boating and fishing economy.

We appreciate your time and consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Chad Tokowicz  
Government Relations Manager  
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas  
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# **BRFA testimony,ShoreRivers.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Annie Richards

Position: FAV



**Testimony from ShoreRivers in Support of Chesapeake Bay Restoration Funding**  
**Coastal Trust Fund - Clean Water Commerce Account - Tree Solutions Now**

2/27/25

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT of Chesapeake Bay restoration funding and historical appropriations— including the Coastal Trust Fund, Clean Water Commerce Account, and Tree Solutions Now 2021—** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection organization on Maryland's Eastern Shore with more than 2,000 members. *Our mission is to protect Maryland's Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, education, and engagement.*

ShoreRivers is dedicated to working collaboratively with farmers and rural communities to solve problems of nutrient and sediment loss to waterways from agriculture. We are an incubator for new ideas and technologies for best farming practices that benefit farmers and our Eastern Shore waterways. Critical investments from State agencies have made all the difference in our ability to build trust within our rural communities and deliver results for our waterways. ShoreRivers has been fortunate to receive over \$31,500,000 from the state over the past 10 years through competitive grants. The majority of this funding has been pass-through to local Maryland businesses to get restoration projects in our local farm fields and communities. This funding creates jobs and a conservation economy that will help us achieve clean water, keep Marylanders employed, and support a robust and vibrant rural economy. **The continuation of this funding is essential in light of unpredictable and extreme cuts to federal conservation programs that have negatively impacted our farmers, and our most environmentally vulnerable communities.**

**ShoreRiver urges this committee and Maryland's general assembly to pass a Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 that protects and fully funds the following programs:**

1. **The Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund—** One of the most highly regarded state programs by environmental organizations across Maryland, this fund brings national recognition to Maryland's efforts to reduce nonpoint source pollution. The 2010 Trust Fund not only supports conservation and restoration to reduce nonpoint source pollution but supports Maryland businesses that provide technical engineering services, general construction contracting, and local nonprofits who work hand in hand with the local communities and small governments. ShoreRivers opposes funding recommendations from the Department of Legislative Services to "Expand the use of the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund for fiscal 2026 through-2029 to be used for the Department of Natural Resources' general operating expenses". We ask that the Trust fund be funded at FY25 levels for the next year, to continue essential restoration work occurring across our State that benefits our rivers, communities, and habitats.
2. **The Clean Water Commerce Account—** This relatively new account provides one of the most cost-effective methods to fund conservation and restoration work in the state. This pay for performance program enables private investment and reduces financial liabilities to the state by requiring documentation of verification of milestones and nitrogen reduction

**ShoreRivers**

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper  
Ben Ford, Miles Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

before payment is disbursed. This type of program is pointed out in the Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR) report as one of the best paths forward to achieving clean water goals. **ShoreRivers supports Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) sustaining full funding of the program for fiscal year 2025 and opposes the Department of Legislative Services' (DLS) recommendation to authorize the Clean Water Commerce Account's fiscal 2026 appropriation to support operating expenses in the MDE Water and Science Administration in fiscal year 2026.**

3. **Tree Solutions Now Funding at the Department of Agriculture (MDA)**— Since this General Assembly passed the Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021, 2.5 million dollars has been annually appropriated to MDA for the purpose of planting forest buffers on farmland— perhaps the most cost effective management practice for Bay Restoration. The Governor's Budget recently cut 2 million from that 2.5 million, leaving a remaining \$500,000 which MDA currently uses for tree planting incentives in the [Conservation Buffer Initiative Program](#). The Governor's Budget amendment also established a separate line item for LEEF (a new incentive program within the Governors Bay Legacy Act) totaling \$900,000. **ShoreRivers urges the remaining 1.1 million that was removed from Tree Solutions Now be restored so that SB898/HB1175 -- Nearshore Farming and Finance can be fully funded and help accelerate Maryland's environmental goals at a fiscally responsible rate on Maryland's farmland.** This bill helps Maryland achieve the goals outlined in Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021, and as the state faces significant budget challenges, SB898/HB1175 maximizes nutrient reductions by targeting less than .19% of Maryland's farm land at a cost of \$9.08 per pound of nitrogen (this rate is *significantly* lower than *any* rates proposed for the [Clean Water Commerce Act FY23 Solicitation](#)).

We are at a pivotal point in the clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Coastal Bays – in 2025, many of the original goals of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement will reach their targeted deadline and we will continue to have critically important conversations around what beyond 2025 looks like for the Chesapeake Bay Program. With Governor Moore currently serving as the Chair of the Chesapeake Executive Council, Maryland has a unique opportunity to lead the Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts and its partners across the watershed. In the wake of this federal funding crisis, coupled with Maryland's work to pass a balanced budget, we recognize the considerable tasks before this legislative body. A thriving environment fuels our public health, enjoyment of this great state, and is the backbone for the industries Maryland is proud to claim. At this critical juncture, we urge the general assembly to reaffirm their commitment to Bay health and restoration, and protect the funding streams that have the highest potential for a clean Chesapeake, and thriving communities.

Sincerely,  
**Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper** on behalf of ShoreRivers.

# **HB352 BRFA LMB Testimony SMADC.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lisa Kovacs

Position: FAV





**Local power, collective voice  
for Maryland's children, youth and families**

February 27, 2025

**SUPPORT – HB352 - Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 - Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)**

Dear Delegates:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards, I strongly support reinstating full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) in the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025. The proposed \$250,000 cut to SMADC's funding for FY26 will significantly impact Maryland's agricultural industry, ultimately affecting residents across the state by interfering with the ability to provide high-quality, locally grown food.

SMADC plays a vital role in supporting farmers, promoting agricultural education, strengthening rural economies, and advancing sustainable practices. It is important to note that this is not new funding; SMADC has been allocated funds from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF) for over two decades. When SMADC was established during the Tobacco Buyout, 5% of the CRF was designated to support agriculture in Southern Maryland. Although this funding constitutes only a small portion of the total CRF allocation, which provides approximately \$108 million annually to the Maryland Department of Health, it is essential for ensuring the viability of Maryland's agricultural sector.

The Governor's proposed budget cut threatens to disrupt essential programs that SMADC provides to farmers and communities statewide. With just \$900,000 in base funding last fiscal year, SMADC successfully leveraged an additional \$2 million in grants, demonstrating a strong return on investment. These funds directly support small farms, local food production, and economic development initiatives benefiting the state.

In FY24 alone, SMADC's funding enabled:

- 30 Farm Mini-Grants totaling \$60,000, directly supporting farm improvements.
- \$10,050 in scholarships and sponsorships, fostering agricultural education.
- \$15,000 to youth farmers through the SOMD Meats Program, ensuring the next generation of agricultural leaders.
- Expansion of the Maryland Market Money program to over 60 locations and 720+ farmers/producers, increasing access to fresh, local food for low-income families.
- Direct support for 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and programming.

These numbers reflect just a fraction of the vital work SMADC accomplishes each year. Cutting its funding will weaken local farms and small businesses and impact food accessibility and economic sustainability throughout Maryland.



Local power, collective voice  
for Maryland's children, youth and families

As someone who has witnessed the positive impact of SMADC on our agricultural community, I urge you to restore the full \$1 million in funding. This investment is essential to maintaining a resilient food system, supporting local farmers, and ensuring that Maryland residents continue to have access to fresh, locally produced food.

**We urge you to support funding to support SMADC in HB352 - Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 and oppose those initiatives that cut holes in our increasingly fragile safety net.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P M Brown". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Pamela M. Brown, PhD  
Chair

# **HB 352 - CBF - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## House Bill 352

### The Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Date: February 27, 2025  
To: Appropriations Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**  
From: Matt Stegman,  
MD Staff Attorney

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation **SUPPORTS Governor Moore's proposed budget-balancing actions and urges the Committee to resist cuts recommended by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) to key programs that drive and sustain restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.** These programs include the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund, the Waterway Improvement Fund, the Clean Water Commerce Account, and Program Open Space.

#### **MARYLAND'S ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES ARE ALREADY LEADING THE WAY ON DEFICIT REDUCTION:**

The Departments of the Environment (MDE), Natural Resources (DNR), and Agriculture (MDA), and Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) - the state agencies collectively tasked with protecting the Bay - are already making significant contributions to balancing the budget. Collectively, these agencies have a combined operating budget of \$1.046 billion but would, under the Governor's proposed budget plan, contribute \$255.4 million to closing the budget deficit. This means that these agencies are already seeing over a quarter of their total allocations for environmental programming impacted by cuts, fund swaps, and other reductions.

Further reductions in these agencies' budgets put Maryland at risk of backsliding on the State's water quality progress and commitments. DLS recommendations to radically alter the scope and purpose of Program Open Space, the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund, the Strategic Energy Investment Fund, and the Waterway Improvement Fund would provide short-term budget stability, but have long-term adverse impacts on Marylanders and Chesapeake Bay health. We urge the Committee to resist these changes.

#### **DLS-RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS TO CLEAN WATER PROGRAMS JEOPARDIZE BAY PROGRESS:**

DLS has proposed a new round of cuts to Bay restoration-sustaining programs totaling \$180 million and has proposed the cuts to last three years (Fiscal Year 2026 through 2029) for three vital DNR programs (Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund, Program Open Space, and Waterways Improvement Fund). The proposed cuts would effectively bring restoration efforts supported by those programs, and the jobs they support, to a halt. Delaying restoration programs by three years would delay or reverse the progress made by years of sustained investment at a time when State-level leadership is most crucial.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*



**The Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund** directly supports on-the-ground projects that address nonpoint source pollution in all regions of the state and is critical in funding agricultural practices that reduce nutrient runoff into local waterways. From FY09 to FY24, Trust Fund investments have leveraged more than \$283 million in outside funds, reduced nitrogen inputs by more than 1.5 million pounds, and prevented more than 200,000 pounds of phosphorus from reaching Bay waters.

The Governor's budget plan contemplates a one-year diversion of a small portion of the Fund for departmental operations. DLS' recommendation would completely cut out the programs supported by the Fund for the next three fiscal years – at least \$65 million annually and as much as \$195 million in total. Given Maryland's Clean Water Act obligations under the Total Maximum Daily Load, the State risks enforcement action by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency without continued investment in nutrient reduction practices. Diversion of these funds jeopardizes our progress in addressing agricultural runoff, the largest source of nutrient pollution into the Bay.

**The Waterway Improvement Fund** is one of the only sources of State support for living shoreline projects. Living shorelines are a proven natural approach to protecting tidal shorelines from erosion. Compared to hardened shorelines lined with riprap, bulkheads, and concrete, living shorelines produce cleaner water by settling sediment and filtering pollution, better shoreline habitat for wildlife like nesting turtles and shorebirds, and improved shallow water habitat for species like underwater grasses, blue crabs, and finfish. Living shorelines are the only shoreline stabilization approach that can naturally adapt to rising sea levels, preventing flooding and property loss. Sea level rise threatens more than 110,500 homes in the Chesapeake region, with estimated losses topping \$34 billion. DLS-recommended repurposing of this fund would direct an estimated \$75 million over the next three years out of much-needed projects and programs. Reducing investments in natural climate resilient infrastructure places lives and properties at risk and costs Maryland more in the long-term.

**Program Open Space** supports Maryland meeting our land preservation and forest retention goals through the targeted acquisition of properties in every corner of the state. Conservation of existing high-quality forests and open spaces before they become degraded is one of the most cost-effective approaches to achieving water quality and habitat goals. DLS' recommended three-year pause on Program Open Space land acquisition and repurposing of funding into general DNR operations would direct between \$120 and \$200 million out of this program.

Open spaces are a finite resource and failing to take the opportunity to preserve properties when they present themselves means those opportunities may be forfeited forever. Program Open Space is already under strain after a period of transfer tax revenue under attainment and pausing land purchases for three consecutive years could set a precedent that undermines or eliminates this landmark program.

One of the key ways the Governor has proposed supporting MEA, DNR, MDE, and MDA in maintaining their Bay-focused mission is a proposed one-time \$150 million transfer from the **Strategic Energy Investment Fund**. An additional BRFA provision would sweep current and future interest earnings from the SEIF into the General Fund (over \$30 million in each of FY 25 and 26). The DLS analysis recommends an additional \$30 million from SEIF be transferred to the general fund – a total of \$180 million. *Additional transfers from the SEIF may impair its ability to fulfill the intended purpose of supporting long-term clean energy development and climate resiliency in the state.*

DLS recommends \$20 million dedicated **Clean Water Commerce Account** funds – the entirety of the fund – be repurposed for operations within MDE’s Water and Science Administration on a one-year basis. The Clean Water Commerce Account is an impactful tool to leverage private sector investment in a pay-for-performance model to efficiently reduce sediment and nutrient pollution entering Chesapeake Bay. It is imperative that the Committee protect the long-term viability of this successful program and honor the investments for projects that have already been selected.

## **INVESTMENTS IN CLEAN AIR AND WATER PAY DIVIDENDS AND GROW OUR ECONOMY:**

Investments in clean water and air are investments in Marylanders—our health, our jobs, and our ways of life. Protecting air and water quality saves lives and reduces economic stress for families. In Maryland, our seafood industry sustains coastal communities, contributing nearly \$600 million to the state's economy annually.<sup>1</sup> Every acre of oyster reef restored provides more than \$40,000 annually in non-harvest benefit, and robust recreation, hunting and fishing opportunities supported by DNR’s investments result in nearly \$20 billion in economic impacts annually.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond indirect economic benefits, these programs directly support Maryland jobs through the “restoration economy.” Restoration projects employ a broad range of different trades and skilled workers from scientist, landscapers, heavy equipment operators, boat captains, and others. For every \$1M invested in restoration, 15 to 30 new jobs are created, which is more than twice as many jobs as the oil and gas and road construction industries combined.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, pausing funding on these critical programs actually stunts Maryland’s economic growth.

In light of the tremendous fiscal challenge ahead, and the uncertainty of environmental policies under the new federal administration, it is more critical than ever that this year’s budget delivers on Maryland’s commitments to the Bay and our watershed’s natural resources. **For these reasons, CBF urges the Committee’s SUPPORT HB 352 as submitted by Governor Moore and reject DLS-recommended cuts to programs that sustain Chesapeake Bay restoration.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/seafoodp.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2022/02/01/maryland-office-of-outdoor-recreation-is-up-and-running/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20outdoor%20recreation.state%20and%20local%20tax%20revenue>.

<sup>3</sup> [https://estuaries.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Jobs-and-Dollars\\_2011.pdf](https://estuaries.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Jobs-and-Dollars_2011.pdf)

# **Testimony HB 352 2.27.pdf**

Uploaded by: Riley Layman

Position: FAV



**Testimony**  
**HB 352 – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**  
**House Appropriations Committee & House Ways and Means Committee**  
**February 27, 2025**

**Position:** Favorable

Dear Chair Barnes, Chair Atterbeary, and Distinguished Committee Members,

The Baltimore County Land Trust Coalition (BCLTC) represents the five independent land trusts in Baltimore County: the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy, the Land Preservation Trust, the Long Green Land Trust, the Manor Conservancy, and NeighborSpace of Baltimore County. These nonprofit organizations work to preserve nature, farms, and open space in Baltimore County by holding conservation easements on privately owned land. By forming a coalition, the land trusts of Baltimore County are able to not only share expertise and resources, but also speak with a unified voice.

The land preservation programs funded by the transfer tax in Maryland, including Program Open Space, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, and the Rural Legacy program, are essential to the work of the land trusts in Baltimore County. They rely on Rural Legacy program funding for new easement acquisitions and continued stewardship of existing easements. Over 8,000 acres have been preserved through the Rural Legacy program in Baltimore County to date. As such, the Rural Legacy program has, for years, been one of the most impactful contributions to the permanent preservation of agriculturally and ecologically valuable land across Baltimore County.

While the success of these programs in Baltimore County cannot be overstated, there is still important preservation work left to be done. The development pressure on natural and open space land in the County has never been stronger. Funding for these programs will allow the land trusts to continue their work in protecting our valued agricultural and natural resources for generations to come.

BCLTC urges you to support the budget as proposed and respectfully requests that you reject any future proposals to transfer or eliminate funding for Maryland's land preservation programs.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to land preservation across the State.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Riley Layman".

Riley Layman, Executive Director

# **Friends of MD State Parks Testimony- Support For H**

Uploaded by: Tim Casey

Position: FAV



**Friends of Maryland State Parks**  
*is a statewide, independent, all-volunteer, citizen 501 (c) 3 organization.*  
*We are dedicated to **preserve, protect, enhance, and advocate** for our state parks.*

**Friends of Maryland State Parks Support for HB352**

Date: Feb 25, 2025

The Friends of Maryland State Parks are in favor of and support the HB352 provision on page 130, SECTION 16, which says:

“The Governor may appropriate to the Department of Natural Resources up to \$16,400,000 from the Program Open Space State land acquisition fund balance for operating expenses in the Maryland Park Service in fiscal year 2026 only.”

If this BRFA provision is not passed, the MPS Operating Budget will be reduced by over 20%, similar to FY2023. State Parks will not be able to operate as the 2022 Great MD Outdoors Act intended for millions of Maryland citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Casey

*Friends of MD State Parks 501 (3) All-Volunteer Non-Profit*  
*Tim Casey, Secretary, 17 Lochwynd Court Phoenix, MD 21131*  
*443 801 6272 [tjwcasey@comcast.net](mailto:tjwcasey@comcast.net)*  
*<http://friendsofmdparks.org/>*

# **LPT Testimony - BRFA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ann Jones

Position: FWA





**LPT LAND PRESERVATION TRUST**

13501 Falls Road  
Cockeysville, Maryland 21030

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### **Testimony – House Appropriations and Ways and Means Committees BRFA – HB352 February 27, 2025**

**Position:** Favorable With Amendments

Dear Chair Barnes, Chair Atterbeary, and Distinguished Committee Members:

The Land Preservation Trust is the sponsor of the Piney Run Watershed Rural Legacy area. Since the inception of the program in 1999 we have protected more than 7,500 acres of critical habitats, streams, farms and forests. Our goal is to protect 80% of the Rural Legacy area resulting in a permanent legacy for future generations.

HB352 as presented by the Governor includes two reallocations of funding to Program Open Space. Both are listed as one-time diversions for FY2016, neither include a repayment plan as required by HB 462, Chapter 10 of 2016 which both returned programs funded by the transfer tax to full funding and requires repayments of any funds so diverted over the next 3 fiscal years.

We recognize that there are severe budget constraints this year. We understand that sacrifices must be made to all programs funded by the state. For that reason our testimony for today was to have been that while we are troubled by the proposals to cut \$340,000 from the Heritage areas to use to fund operations in the Department of Planning and \$16.4 million from state side Program Open Space we are willing to accept those cuts, providing that an amendment was added stating that they would be paid back over the next 3 years in accordance with HB 462, Chapter 10 of 2016.

While not contained in the BRFA before you today, we are well aware that there is a Department of Legislative Services proposal included in the DNR operating budget to cut all of the land preservation efforts of the state for FY 26 through FY 29 with no provision for payback.

Cutting all of the funding for these programs would be devastating to the efforts of the Land Preservation Trust to preserve one of the most important agricultural and natural resource areas in Maryland, the Piney Run Watershed Rural Legacy Area.

The streams in the Piney Run Area drain into either the Loch Raven or Prettyboy reservoirs, major sources of drinking water for much of the Baltimore Metropolitan area. Our land preservation efforts directly contribute to the quality of our drinking water. The area is in the middle of one of the most productive bands of agricultural land stretching from Lancaster County to Frederick County. The agricultural importance of the area is underscored by the fact that two of the largest grain processing facilities in the state – Lippy Brothers and Trenton Mill Farm are located in or

adjacent to the area. These farms operate in an international market, and indeed when the cargo ship Dali tragically ran into the Key bridge it was carrying 148 containers of soybeans bound for Indonesia

The remarkable preservation that has occurred in the Piney Run area has involved all available preservation programs – easements donated to either the Maryland Environmental Trust or the Land Preservation Trust, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, Baltimore Counties own purchased easement program and most importantly the Rural Legacy Program. It is the Rural Legacy program that allows the preservation of the large contiguous area that supports our agricultural economy, improves water quality, contributes to species diversity and protection, and enhances the quality of life for all. All within an easy commute of downtown Baltimore.

We urge you to support the Governor's budget as initially presented and reject the future DLS recommendation to full cut Maryland's land preservation programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ann H. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ann" being the most prominent.

Ann H. Jones, Easement Administrator

# **Partners.DLS Budget.Oppose.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carol Bean

Position: FWA

# PARTNERS *for* OPEN SPACE

Please **OPPOSE** DLS Recommendations to Cut POS Funding

**House Appropriations Joint Hearing for  
Budget Reconciliation and Finance Act  
February 27, 2025  
Position: Favorable w/Amendments**

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Joint Committee,

Partners for Open Space (Partners) is the dedicated statewide coalition that passionately advocates for the preservation of Maryland's cherished lands, including our farms, forests, parks, and playgrounds. Since 1969, Maryland has been a national leader in land preservation, thanks to the visionary legislature that established a dedicated revenue source, the transfer tax.

The transfer tax, a modest levy on real estate transactions, is the lifeblood of Maryland's conservation efforts. It funds the purchase and development of state and local parkland, protects farmland through voluntary conservation easements, safeguards valuable ecological land, supports Heritage Areas that narrate the story of our land, and provides young farmers with much-needed access to land. Maryland's transfer tax was the first of its kind in the nation, serving as a beacon of inspiration for other states to follow. Its consistent structure has been a reliable source of funding, benefiting all Maryland citizens and garnering strong support across the state. Each year, the demand for these programs outstrips the available funds, highlighting their critical importance.

Partners supports the Governor's budget with two crucial amendments. The proposed budget diverts \$16.4 million from state-side acquisition and \$340,000 from the Heritage Areas. **We, however, strongly urge the Joint Committee to reject the Department of Legislative Services proposal to zero-out Program Open Space Fund for FY26. Such a cut would be devastating to all of Maryland's land preservation, parks and recreation, and heritage area programs.**

We earnestly request a favorable report that restores full funding to these programs and the rejection of the DLS recommendations. Ensuring the transfer tax's complete funding will enable these programs, and others supported by this revenue, to continue their vital work for the well-being of its citizens.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to preserving Maryland's natural heritage.

Owen Bailey and Charlotte Davis, co-Chairs



## Steering Committee Members

Owen Bailey, Co-Chair  
Eastern Shore Land  
Conservancy

Charlotte Davis, Co-Chair  
Rural Maryland Council

Ann Jones  
Baltimore County Land  
Trust Alliance

Kristin Kirkwood  
Forever Maryland /  
Harford Land Trust

Mark Conway  
Chesapeake  
Conservancy

Bill Crouch  
The Conservation Fund

Matt Heim  
Lower Shore Land Trust

Jessica Lays  
MACO Parks and  
Recreation  
Administrators

Nicholas Redding  
Preservation Maryland

Michelle Dietz  
The Nature  
Conservancy

Lucille Walker  
Southern Maryland  
National Heritage Area

Kent Whitehead  
The Trust for Public  
Land

## **969300\_House Appropriations\_AgricultureConservatio**

Uploaded by: Humna Sharif

Position: FWA

**Thursday, February 27, 2025**

**TO:** Ben Barnes, Chair Appropriations Committee; and Committee Members

**FROM:** Humna Sharif, The Nature Conservancy, Climate Adaptation Manager; and Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations

**POSITION:** 969300 Agriculture/Conservation/Environment/Natural Resources Favorable with Amendments

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports with amendments Governor Moore's initial FY26 budget for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as well as the budgets for Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Energy Administration and Maryland Department of Agriculture – these are our state's environmental agencies and their impact on the vibrancy of life and livelihoods in Maryland cannot be over-stated.

TNC is strongly opposed to the cuts being recommended by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) for the environment, conservation, and resilience programs carried out by these agencies. Our testimony today specifically discusses impacts of these cuts on the DNR budget. For DNR, DLS is recommending cutting 100% of the funding for all land preservation programs – including Program Open Space, Rural Legacy, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation – through Fiscal Year 2029.

The Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act Recommendations proposed by DLS includes the following:

- Modify the transfer tax for fiscal 2026 through 2029 to provide a base amount of funding to the Maryland Park Service that would inflate each year and transfer funding for land preservation programs to the General Fund.
- Expand the use of the Waterway Improvement Fund for fiscal 2026 through 2029 to be used for the Department of Natural Resources' general operating expenses.
- Expand the use of the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund for fiscal 2026 through 2029 to be used for the Department of Natural Resources' general operating expenses.

TNC recognizes the difficult financial year that our state faces and understands the need for the state to balance its budgets, however these cuts cannot come at the expense of reversing decades of environmental progress in Maryland. The above drastic measures were not included in the Governor's budget – the initial FY26 budget by the administration took a measured approach to reduce the state's expenses in the coming year. DNR's conservation and stewardship programs are vital for conserving Maryland's natural landscapes, supporting local agriculture, preserving our rural heritage, and protecting the fragile ecosystem balance of the Chesapeake Bay. TNC appreciates that the administration and legislature has continued to dedicate full funding to foundational environmental programs across the state in previous years, and we request that this holds true again in FY2026. In previous years, funding originally meant for some of these programs has been redirected elsewhere in the state budget. Over time, this raiding of accounts leads to underinvestment in conservation outcomes, decreasing the impacts of programs that were established to provide essential environmental and conservation services. The DLS recommendations for cuts this year are unprecedented in their scope and potential negative impacts. The negative impact of cutting DNR's funding for key conservation, restoration, management, and resilience activities goes far beyond one fiscal year and we implore the legislature to consider long-term harm within their decision-making.

**We ask that you preserve these highly valuable conservation and resilience funding streams in your final decisions for the FY2026 budget, and thank you for the efforts you've already made to protect this funding.**

We urge you to accept the Governor's proposed budget for the DNR and other environmental agencies like MDE, MEA, and MDA. We understand the need to transfer 27.6% of general operating funds in this year's budget but strongly urge you to treat these reductions as one-time cuts and resist further cuts in the FY26 budget. Environmental protection and robust climate programs are a fraction of the state's budget but provide outsized benefits for all Marylanders and our states irreplaceable natural heritage. Funding for these programs should be enhanced and treated as an essential part of the solution to preserve our state's economic wellbeing, and the path towards achieving the ambitious climate and resilience goals of the Climate Solutions Now Act.





# **Audubon\_FWA\_FY2026Budget.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jim Brown

Position: FWA



**Maryland Office**  
2901 E. Baltimore St  
Baltimore, MD 21224

Feb 26, 2025

**To:** Maryland House of Delegates Appropriations Committee

**From:** Audubon Mid-Atlantic - Jim Brown, Policy Director

**Subject:** Please OPPOSE Department of Legislative Services' recommendations to cut Department of Natural Resources, Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Funding, Program Open Space, and Land Preservation Programs (969300)

We urge you to oppose the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommendations for DNR, Program Open Space, and The Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund for FY 2026. Rather, Audubon Mid-Atlantic submits this testimony in support of the Governor's proposed budget for environmental agencies (MDE, DNR, MDA) in FY 2026. We acknowledge the challenges of this year's projected budget deficit, but the proposed DLS budget recommendations for these programs will have ongoing negative impacts to the state's economy, public health, quality of life, and ability to prepare for the impacts of climate change. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of the National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies protecting both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

The recommendations of a 24.4% reduction in General Funds from the environmental state agencies is not a sustainable path forward considering the vital work they do to protect the health and safety of our communities, as well as protect the resources that are the foundations of our economic future. Maryland should be investing now more than ever in the state agencies which advance natural climate solutions, habitat conservation & restoration, and climate resiliency. Of particular concern is the DLS recommendation to modify the transfer tax & Program Open Space, the Waterways Improvement Fund, and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund for FY 2026 to 2029 to help pay the general fund, and operations. These special funds are instrumental in advancing the goals of Program Open Space, habitat restoration, water quality, and equitable access to healthy environments for everyone. Diverting revenue from these sources for three years is not in Maryland's best fiscal interests.

In Maryland, Program Open Space has been used to acquire and protects Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in every region of the state. IBAs are identified by the National Audubon Society as places of critical local and hemispheric importance to the survival of resident and migrating birds for the habit they provide. The 44 IBAs in Maryland represent the highest quality remaining habitats for vulnerable bird species. These IBAs often overlap with some of our most significant, and most visited natural areas. IBAs are therefore given the utmost protection from

development pressures and are often within or near our most iconic parks and preserved land. Without Program Open Space, this type of conservation and public access program is under threat. In addition to bird habitat, these special places also provide natural climate solutions, support local economies, and buffer local communities from the impacts of climate change.

Protecting Maryland's Chesapeake and Coastal Bays' tidal salt marshes is a top priority for Audubon. Through a program called "Marshes for Tomorrow," we aim to restore 29,000 acres of threatened saltmarsh with state, federal and local partners through ecological restoration practices. Saving marshes protects disappearing bird habitat and supports local economies. This work cannot happen without a robust Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund, Bay Restoration Fund, Program Open Space, and the Bay Restoration Fund. These programs which address the threats our coasts face cannot sustain a three-year hiatus. They should be pillars of our financial planning.

These disappearing marshes are critically important to Maryland's cultural, economic, geographic and environmental identity. Continued investment in DNR programs helps advance the benefits that tidal salt marshes bring to Maryland's bird habitat, our water quality, and local economies. Restoration of Maryland's iconic salt marshes support a broad range of livelihoods and economies in Maryland.

As just one example, Ecological Restoration of Maryland's Tidal Salt Marshes directly support:

- Sustenance of fisheries, supporting over \$600 million of the Maryland seafood industry's impact on the Maryland Economy
- Providing the places and natural infrastructure for \$951 million in outdoor recreation spending annually in coastal Maryland
- A protective natural buffer to the \$1 Billion agriculture economy of Maryland

Across the state, investments in our open spaces, our watersheds, and public parks are critical to the health and wellbeing of all Marylanders, and to the hundreds of bird species which live in and migrate through Maryland. Now is not the time to divest from the programs that support environmental protection. Science tells us birds are in decline due to climate change related habitat loss. 1/3 of all Maryland bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. The Governor's proposed budget for DNR will position Maryland to slow this habitat loss while investing in natural systems to protect habitat, improve water quality and increase resiliency protections for our communities and our economy.

A healthy environment and climate resilient ecosystems are the best fiscal defense we can plan for. An adequately funded DNR, MDE and MDA is our best path forward.

# **MDLCV - OPPOSE\_ DLS Cuts in the BRFA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kristen Harbeson

Position: FWA



MARYLAND  
LEAGUE OF  
CONSERVATION  
VOTERS

Kim Coble  
Executive Director

February 23, 2025

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The Hon. Steve Lafferty  
Bonnie L. Norman

**OPPOSE: - 2026 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act Cuts**

Mme. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV has been your partner for more than forty years, working with you to pass some of the most ambitious environmental legislation in the country. **We are writing now to urge you to reject recent recommendations by DLS to drastically cut funding in the BRFA for Maryland Departments of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, as well as the Maryland Energy Administration.**

We have accepted the Governor's proposed budget for the Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Energy Administration and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Collectively, these 4 agencies oversee the policies, programs and science to protect Maryland's environment and community health.

We respect the challenge in front of you to address the projected \$2.9 billion deficit, and that we all must play a part in reaching a balanced budget this legislative session. For this reason, we are supportive of the Governor's budget, as introduced. We believe that the approach represents a balanced, responsible approach to this year's budget challenges while maintaining the state's commitment to environmental protection.

At the same time, we want to reinforce that a 24.4% reduction in General Funds from the environmental state agencies is not a sustainable path forward. The Department of Environment, Maryland Energy Administration, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Agriculture are a negligible part - barely more than 1% - of the state's overall operating budget, but carry a heavy burden to protect the health and safety of our communities, as well as protect the resources that are the cornerstone of our economic future.

Further cuts to these departments, **such as the cuts to DNR that DLS has proposed**, would be debilitating to the agency's fundamental functions as well as impairing of three of our state's signature industries - agriculture and fisheries and the tourism that is drawn to our waters, parks and open space. According to the most recent data from the [Maryland Office of Tourism](#), tourism contributed more than \$30 billion to the state's economy in a single year. [The University of Maryland](#) estimates that agriculture contributes \$8.3 billion to the state's

economy, while the [American Sportsfishing Association](#) estimates the annual economic contributions of anglers to Maryland at \$1.6 Billion. These three industries, alone, represent almost 8% of Maryland's total GDP, and are only a sampling of the economic impact overseen by the environmental agencies.

Beyond harming our state's financial health, reducing the support for the environmental agencies undermines the health of Marylanders. The Department of the Environment is the first line of defense against industrial air pollution that burdens our state. Even a cursory review of scientific literature from the [National Institute of Health](#) and the [Children's Environmental Health Initiative](#) shows increasing evidence of the links between air pollution, and asthma, cancer, and developmental impairment in children. While MDE is tasked with regulating and enforcing industrial air pollution, the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) provides one of the most important sources of funding for individuals and communities to reduce their contributions to pollution and investing in their environmental health.

Additionally, reducing support to the agencies that protect Marylanders from air and water pollution will only contribute to the rising healthcare costs associated with environmental pollutants, especially in already overburdened and underserved communities. In 2020, alone, [Marylanders spent \\$49 million](#) on asthma treatment, much of which was for emergency room visits for children. These visits impede children's abilities to learn, participate in afterschool activities that can offer social benefits and scholarship opportunities, and also may require parents to stay home from work - which hurts both their family incomes and their input to the state's economy. Without robust oversight from the Department of the Environment to regulate pollution, these numbers will only grow, hurting our state's bottom line.

Much of the General Funds from the state agencies has been replaced by a \$228.5 million draw from the SEIF. These funds, however, are the main source of support for critical climate programs, including grants to help increase energy efficiency - and reduce energy costs - of low and moderate income Marylanders, and supporting the energy assistance program. These funds also provide grants to local governments to support their clean energy policies that reduce energy usage and increase cost savings, as well as programs that help build grid resilience and energy independence across the state.

As Maryland moves to meet its climate mandates these investments will be a cornerstone of Maryland's economic future, with policies expected to generate as much as \$1.2 billion in public health benefits, \$2.5 billion in increased personal income which is coupled with expected household savings of \$4000/year on energy costs and a net gain of 27,400 jobs between now and 2031.

As the Federal government signals a decline of support for renewable energy and energy efficiency programs, Maryland's commitment to these initiatives will be

increasingly critical to protect Maryland families from the harmful effect of fossil fuels including excessive bills from energy inefficient homes and appliances, rising health care costs from environmental pollutants, and the stranded costs of fossil fuel infrastructure. The funds in the SEIF are uniquely directed to these goals.

We urge you to accept the Governor's proposed budget for the environmental agencies. We understand the need to transfer 27.6% of general operating funds in this year's budget but strongly urge you to treat these reductions as one-time cuts and resist further cuts in the FY26 budget. Environmental protection and robust climate programs should be recognized and enhanced as an essential part of the solution to bring the state out of its fiscal woes.

# **Testimony HB351 BRFA - Forever Maryland\_final.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kristin Kirkwood

Position: FWA





Testimony on HB351 – Budget Reconciliation and Finance Act (BRFA)

February 27, 2025

House Appropriations Committee

Kristin Kirkwood, Chair Forever Maryland

**Position: Oppose DLS recommendation to cut land preservation programs**

Forever Maryland represents Maryland's land trust community. Local land trusts are valuable partners in the efforts to preserve the most important farms, forests and ecological areas in the state. We work side by side with state and local government to reach the goal of permanently preserving 40% of the state by the year 2040.

On behalf of Forever Maryland and more than 20 affiliated local land trusts, we are writing to express our **strong opposition to the Department of Legislative Services recommendation to divert funding "for land preservation programs – POS State, POS Local, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, and Rural Legacy Program – to the General Fund."**

Enacted in 1969, Maryland's transfer tax, a small tax on real estate transactions, was the nation's first dedicated funding source for land conservation. The ½% transfer tax funds the purchase and development of state and local parkland, the protection of farmland through voluntary conservation easements, the purchase and protection of valuable ecological land, supports Heritage Areas, and works to provide young farmers with access to land. This model has made Maryland a national land preservation leader.

Forever Maryland appreciates and supports the Governor's proposed budget in this difficult financial climate; however, we strongly urge the Committee to **reconsider diversion of funds from the Program Open Space stateside fund balance as well as any future real estate transfer tax revenues.**

We must emphasize that Program Open Space has been consistently and repeatedly targeted for diversions and reductions for well over 20 years. The very nature and intention of special funds, derived from the transfer tax, are meant to reflect market forces, causing the fund to be larger during productive real estate markets, when the cost of conservation project acquisitions also increases. Diversions prevent Program Open Space from operating as intended and risk a lack of funds for critical land and easement purchases.

Preservation of Maryland's farms, forests, and parks is vital to the long-term prosperity of our state. These lands are economic and environmental engines - providing jobs, food, habitat, essential ecosystem services, and more – and they must be preserved for future generations.

Successful land preservation relies on consistent available funding. Each program funded by the transfer tax is greatly oversubscribed with far more applicants than funds available. We cannot lose the remaining window of opportunity to preserve these irreplaceable lands.

**Forever Maryland urges the Committee to oppose the Department of Legislative Services recommendation to divert funding from Maryland's land preservation programs.** Any cuts to the programs will directly impact Maryland's goal of preserving 40% of our farms, forests and open space by 2040 thereby causing harm to the economy and overall well-being of Maryland.

# **HB 352\_AACFB Testimony FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Leah Paley

Position: FWA



## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 352**

### **WITH AMENDMENT**

#### **Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**

February 27, 2025

---

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committees,

On behalf of the Anne Arundel County Food Bank (AACFB), I strongly urge your Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

As the countywide food bank in Anne Arundel County since 1986, AACFB regularly procures fresh, nutritious produce from local farmers. This produce is distributed to community members experiencing food insecurity through our network of 70+ partners across 100+ distribution locations. The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission's work is essential to the success of our local food system, and we respectfully ask that you reinstate full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the FY2026 budget so that they can continue their important work to cultivate a dynamic food system.

It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC; it is 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 its creation during the Tobacco Buyout.

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing, and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million annually from this CRF fund, plus their additional funding. SMADC requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland and the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide. Full funding supports the agricultural economy, small business innovation, and food and farming education. It is worth noting that with just our \$900,000 in base funding last fiscal year, SMADC leveraged that to bring in over \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.

---

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SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone, they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15,000 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all our active programming.

We respectfully ask that you reinstate full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the FY2026 budget so that they can continue their important work to cultivate a dynamic food system in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leah Aiello Paley".

Leah Aiello Paley, LMSW  
Chief Executive Officer  
Anne Arundel County Food Bank

# **HB352\_MDSierra\_2.27.2025.docx (2).pdf**

Uploaded by: Lindsey Mendelson

Position: FWA



**Committee: Appropriations and Ways and Means**  
**Testimony on: HB 352 -- Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act**  
**Position: Favorable with Amendments**  
**Hearing Date: February 27, 2025**

## **1. Funding For Clean Energy Programs and Strategic Energy Investment Fund**

In January 2025, the Moore-Miller Administration unveiled its [proposed budget](#) for the 2026 fiscal year. The proposed budget maintains funding for essential energy-related programs including electric vehicles, clean energy, energy efficiency, electrification, and more. Notable investments include:

- \$12 million in increased funding for the Maryland Department of the Environment.
- Increased funding for critical restoration projects for the Chesapeake Bay.
- \$50 million in grants to support solar and geothermal heat pump installations for existing school buildings, and the construction of new net-zero schools.
- \$50 million to increase solar deployment on state properties.

We appreciate the investments in these important energy-related programs.

The proposed budget also includes a one time transfer of \$150 million from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) to the General Fund and the allocation of future interest to the general fund. We recognize the challenging budget situation, but are concerned about the transfer and the precedent it could set for future years, as SEIF is the largest source of funding for clean energy programs. We request that if this transfer is retained, that safeguards are put in place to ensure that this is truly a one-time action.

## **2. New Transportation Revenue**

We encourage the state to consider a full suite of revenue sources that are needed to build a 21st century transportation system that improves mobility for all while mitigating pollution that fuels the climate crisis and exacerbates respiratory illnesses, especially asthma in children. **We support MDOT's proposal in the BRFA to raise \$420 million per year annually through the following measures:**

- Administering at 75 cent delivery fee on retail deliveries for companies earning more than \$500,000 such as Amazon. This fee only applies to products subject to Maryland sales tax and therefore would not apply to groceries, prescriptions, and similar products.
- Increasing the vehicle emissions inspection fee for vehicles from \$14 to \$30.
- Limiting the deduction for trade-in tax credit for vehicles to sales under \$15,000.

It is critical that revenue measures are paired with reforms to prioritize funding in ways that reduce pollution, improve public health and mobility, and invest in historically underserved

communities. Therefore, we strongly encourage the **House to pass the Transportation Investment Priorities Act of 2025 (HB 20) and Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2025 (HB 84) that** would help direct future spending in ways that align with the state's goals. Sierra Club's support for the \$420 million revenue package is contingent on the Transportation Investment Priorities Act and the Transportation and Climate Alignment Act advancing at the same time.

The \$420 million revenue package in the BRFA will support the Sierra Club's key transportation priorities including maintaining minimum funding levels for the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA's) state of good repair (SOGR) needs and funding the Complete Streets Program and Kim Lamphier Bikeways program. However, there is still insufficient funding for the Maryland Transit Administration's full state of good repair needs, WMATA's adjusted capital needs, expansion of Maryland's public transit system (including construction funding for the Red Line), and investments in electric vehicle infrastructure. MTA's transition to zero-emission buses required under the Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act would be delayed for nearly a decade without intervention to find new financial resources. Therefore, we urge the committees to identify and pass additional revenue measures.

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
[josh.tulkin@mdsierra.org](mailto:josh.tulkin@mdsierra.org)

Lindsey Mendelson  
Senior Transportation Campaign Representative  
[lindsey.mendelson@mdsierra.org](mailto:lindsey.mendelson@mdsierra.org)

Mariah Shriner  
Climate Campaign Representative  
[mariah.shriner@mdsierra.org](mailto:mariah.shriner@mdsierra.org)



# **HB 352 SWA\_Chesapeake Conservancy\_2.25.25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mark Conway

Position: FWA



## ***Saving the Chesapeake's Great Rivers and Special Places***

Earl Conservation Center | 1212 West Street | Annapolis, MD 21401

[www.chesapeakeconservancy.org](http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org) | 443.321.3610

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**Patrick F. Noonan**  
The Conservation Fund

**Charles A. Stek**  
Environmental Stewardship Strategies

**Date:** February 24, 2025

**Bill Number:** **HB 352 - Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**

**Committee:** House Appropriations and House Ways and Means Committees

**Position:** Support with Amendment

Chesapeake Conservancy supports an amended HB 352 - Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 for the purpose of continuing to support Maryland's Program Open Space and all it does for investment in parks, habitat conservation, agricultural land conservation, historic preservation, and more.

**Chesapeake Conservancy realizes the tough fiscal challenges that exist, and we support the Administration's proposed budget, but we ask for continued adherence to full cash funding of Program Open Space with no diversions. We request that no further cuts or transfers be made to land conservation programs and that the legislature reject the proposed transfer of \$16,400,000 from the Program Open Space State land acquisition fund balance, for operating expenses in the Maryland Park Service in fiscal year 2026.**

Land conservation isn't just about creating or enhancing parks for better mental and physical wellness. Among many other benefits, conservation helps improve water quality, provides resilience against a changing climate, slows the biodiversity decline, and helps connect the present with the past. Chesapeake Conservancy is the only watershed-wide organization focused on both land conservation and stream restoration to achieve a healthier Chesapeake Bay.

We ask that you continue to support the benefits of conservation and that no further cuts or diversions be made to transfer tax funded conservation programs. Thank you for what you continue to do to support local foods, habitat protection, space for mental and physical wellness, climate resiliency, improved water quality, and the numerous other benefits of preserving Maryland land.

For further information, please contact Mark Conway, Executive Vice President of External Affairs, at [MConway@ChesapeakeConservancy.org](mailto:MConway@ChesapeakeConservancy.org) or 443-321-3610.

# **aprop-brfa-HB0352-natural-resources-favorable-w-am**

Uploaded by: Meagan Baco

Position: FWA



Tuesday, February 25, 2025

The Honorable Representative Benjamin S. Barnes, Esq., Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT - BRFA NATURAL RESOURCES - HB0352 (SB0321)**

Dear Chair Barnes:

I would like to draw your attention to Page 44 of HB0352. Within this legislation is this provision, on p. 44, referring to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA): "(IV) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 ONLY, AN ADDITIONAL \$340,000 OF PROGRAM OPEN SPACE FUNDS TRANSFERRED TO THE AUTHORITY MAY BE USED TO PAY OPERATING EXPENSES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING."

This provision would remove \$340,000 from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority grants that already has a funding gap between eligible and deserving grants and funds available. Each and every Heritage Area grant is reviewed at the local and state level for economic viability through cultural tourism and awarded on merit and impact. **To cut \$340,000 off the top would eliminate 4 grants right off the bat.** As is, the Maryland Heritage Area Authority budget is insufficient for the statewide need (currently capped at \$6M), and that means the economic engine MHAA is designed to be just putters along.

In fact, there is legislation with broad based support also being heard this session —SB0980/HB1327— that will open up possibilities to lift that cap to a more appropriate funding level of \$12M. **When Maryland is ready to tap into the potential of heritage tourism by way of investment in cultural tourism for America 250 and Maryland 400, our unique state heritage areas program will be poised and ready.**

While I am aware of the unenviable position of our state budget, removing funds via BRFA HB0352 from a proven economic development grant program, like the Heritage Areas Program, ultimately harms the communities that the Maryland Department of Planning seeks to serve.

Sincerely,

Meagan Baco, Executive Director  
Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc., 4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, MD 20781  
[meagan@ancostiatrailstrails.org](mailto:meagan@ancostiatrailstrails.org)

# **HB 352\_MTBMA\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michael Sakata

Position: FWA



February 25, 2025

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair  
House Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: HB 352 – FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**

Dear Chair Barnes, Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Committees:

The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (“MTBMA”) has been and continues to serve as the voice for Maryland’s construction transportation industry since 1932. Our association is comprised of 200 members. MTBMA encourages, develops, and protects the prestige of Maryland's transportation construction and materials industry by establishing and maintaining respected relationships with federal, state, and local public officials. We proactively work with regulatory agencies and governing bodies to represent the interests of the transportation industry and advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

Our Association has concerns with certain language within HB 352 as it relates to the surface mining program within the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE). MDE is seeking to increase permitting fees within various programs in MDE. In fact, they proposed this bill last year as well. During the interim and currently, we have met with MDE to discuss the fee increases as it relates to surface mining permits, to work together on a reasonable solution. We understand the fees have not been increased in 30 years, and our members agree there should be some amount of increase, but it needs to be reasonable.

We have presented the following proposal to MDE, which would increase the per acre fee to \$50 and set the cap at \$5,000 with a 1% increase every two years. Please see the amendment language below.

Page 38, Strike Lines 11-17 and replace with the following:

- (I) **\$50 FOR EACH ACRE OF AFFECTED LAND FOR EACH YEAR OF OPERATION, NOT TO EXCEED \$5,000; AND**
- (II) **A 1 PERCENT INCREASE IN FISCAL YEAR 2028 AND EVERY 2 FISCAL YEARS THEREAFTER, BUT NOT TO EXCEED \$75 PER ACRE OF AFFECTED LAND AND A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$10,000.**

Page 40, Strike Lines 11-19 and replace with the following:

- (I) **\$50 FOR EACH ACRE OF AFFECTED LAND OVER AND ABOVE THE AMOUNT OF LAND COVERED IN THE ORIGINAL PERMIT FOR EACH YEAR OF OPERATION, NOT TO EXCEED \$5,000; AND**

- (II) A 1 PERCENT INCREASE IN FISCAL YEAR 2028 AND EVERY 2 FISCAL YEARS THEREAFTER, BUT NOT TO EXCEED \$75 PER ACRE OF AFFECTED LAND AND A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$10,000.**

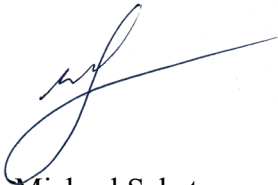
Pages 40-41, Strike Lines 28-31 and 1-3 and replace with the following:

- (I) \$50 FOR EACH ACRE OF AFFECTED LAND FOR EACH YEAR OF OPERATION, NOT TO EXCEED \$5,000; AND**
- (II) A 1 PERCENT INCREASE IN FISCAL YEAR 2028 AND EVERY 2 FISCAL YEARS THEREAFTER, BUT NOT TO EXCEED \$75 PER ACRE OF AFFECTED LAND AND A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$10,000.**

For the record, we would like to acknowledge that we greatly appreciate MDE working collaboratively as partners on this. Their initial proposal which sought to increase the program's annual revenue to \$1.3M is however, unmanageable for our industry. With the massive cuts to the State's transportation budget, and the unreliability of federal dollars being infused into Maryland, our industry is struggling exponentially and the burden of these additional costs will have a significant adverse impact on our member companies who operate surface mines in Maryland. We hope that our proposal is well received and we look forward to continuing to work with MDE to come to a reasonable solution that works for everyone.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our amendments. Thank you.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Sakata', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Sakata  
President and CEO  
Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association

# **HB 352\_MAA\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tim Smith

Position: FWA



CHAIRMAN:  
David Slaughter  
VICE CHAIRMAN  
Paul Bramble



TREASURER:  
Curtis Hall  
SECRETARY:  
Nathan Scrivener  
PRESIDENT:  
Tim Smith

February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair  
House Ways and Means Committee  
130 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: HB 352 – FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**

Dear Chair Barnes, Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Committees:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) represents approximately 120 members, including 20 material producers and 100 contractors, engineering firms, and associate members, supporting a 7,000-person workforce. MAA actively collaborates with regulatory agencies to advocate for the asphalt industry, ensuring fair regulations at both the state and federal levels. Additionally, we support adequate funding for Maryland's multimodal transportation system.

Our Association has concerns with certain language within HB 352 as it relates to the surface mining program within the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE). MDE is seeking to increase permitting fees within various programs in MDE. In fact, they proposed this bill last year as well. During the interim and currently, we have met with MDE to discuss the fee increases as it relates to surface mining permits, to work together on a reasonable solution. We understand the fees have not been increased in 30 years, and our members agree there should be some amount of increase, but it needs to be reasonable.

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CHAIRMAN:  
David Slaughter  
VICE CHAIRMAN  
Paul Bramble

**MARYLAND ASPHALT ASSOCIATION**



TREASURER:  
Curtis Hall  
SECRETARY:  
Nathan Scrivener  
PRESIDENT:  
Tim Smith

- (II) A 1 PERCENT INCREASE IN FISCAL YEAR 2028 AND EVERY 2 FISCAL YEARS THEREAFTER, BUT NOT TO EXCEED \$75 PER ACRE OF AFFECTED LAND AND A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$10,000.**

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**(II) A 1 PERCENT INCREASE IN FISCAL YEAR 2028 AND EVERY 2 FISCAL YEARS THEREAFTER, BUT NOT TO EXCEED \$75 PER ACRE OF AFFECTED LAND AND A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$10,000.**

For the record, we would like to acknowledge that we greatly appreciate MDE working collaboratively as partners on this. Their initial proposal which sought to increase the program's annual revenue to \$1.3M is however, unmanageable for our industry. With the massive cuts to the State's transportation budget, and the unreliability of federal dollars being infused into Maryland, our industry is struggling exponentially and the burden of these additional costs will have a significant adverse impact on our member companies who operate surface mines in Maryland. We hope that our proposal is well received and we look forward to continuing to work with MDE to come to a reasonable solution that works for everyone.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our amendments. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Smith".

Tim Smith, P.E.  
President  
Maryland Asphalt Association

## **MDFB - Support with amendments - HB352 Budget Reco**

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FWA



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035  
410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

February 25, 2025

**To:** House Appropriations Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE: Favorable with Amendments – HB352 – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025, Agriculture/Conservation/Environment/Natural Resources**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit favorable with amendment testimony of the agriculture portion of HB352.

While the members understand the need for effective regulation and oversight in the agriculture industry, they also recognize the importance of striking a balance that supports the interests of farmers, promotes economic growth, and ensures environmental responsibility. The modifications to fees and penalties appears to be a comprehensive effort to address these considerations and modernize the regulatory framework governing the Department of Agriculture

Specifically, they appreciate the attention given to licensing, registration, fees, and penalties, as outlined in the bill. These elements play a critical role in maintaining a fair and transparent system that benefits both the agricultural community and consumers. The proposed changes seem well-reasoned and are likely to contribute to a more efficient and effective regulatory environment.

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) plays a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, and fostering sustainable practices. Currently as drafted, SMADAC will begin a phase out period until Fiscal Year 2029 when they no longer receive funding from the Cigarette Restitution Fund. The CRF fund itself is continually and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF 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.

Maryland Farm Bureau supports HB352 and respectfully asks for an amendment that would strike the language on page 21 lines 1-12 and removes the brackets around “year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter” on page 20 line 24 to ensure that SMADC continues to receive funding from the Cigarette Restitution Fund and is able to support agriculture in Southern Maryland.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions

# **Crone Testimony for HB352.pdf**

Uploaded by: Amy Crone

Position: UNF

## POSITION STATEMENT

House Bill 352

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025  
House Appropriations & Ways & Means Committee  
Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.

February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs Barnes & Atterbeary, Vice Chairs Chang & Wilkins, and other Distinguished Members of the Committees,

My name is Amy Crone, and I, along with my husband and 2 children, run HopScratch Farm in Harwood, Maryland (Anne Arundel County).

I strongly urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15, 00 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

SMADC is a key resource for farmers in the 5-county region and beyond, with their grant programs, management of the Maryland Market Money program as well as provision of other resources including technical assistance and reference materials. Our farm has benefited directly through the small grants program, and we know many others who have also benefited from SMADC's program. This is an urgent matter, as this funding should NOT be cut when it directly supports Maryland's agricultural community..

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Crone

HopScratch Farm

[amy@hopscratchfarm.com](mailto:amy@hopscratchfarm.com)

# **HB351 O The Conservation Fund.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bill Crouch

Position: UNF





Committee: House Appropriations Committee  
Bill Number: House Bill 351 - Budget Reconciliation and Finance Act (BRFA)  
Position: Oppose DLS recommendation to cut land preservation programs  
Hearing Date: February 27, 2025  
Submitted by: Bill Crouch, Maryland State Director, The Conservation Fund

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The Conservation Fund is a top-ranked national nonprofit that protects land and water resources across America. We protect wildlife habitat, working forests and farms, parks, battlefields, historic sites and more. Our land conservation work brings economic benefits, whether we are saving working forests that provide timber and jobs or recreation destinations that provide tourism dollars.

The Conservation Fund **opposes the Department of Legislative Services recommendation to divert funding “for land preservation programs – POS State, POS Local, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, and Rural Legacy Program – to the General Fund.”** While we appreciate and support the Governor’s proposed budget in this difficult financial climate; we strongly urge the Committee to **reconsider diversion of funds from the Program Open Space stateside fund balance as well as any future real estate transfer tax revenues.**

Enacted in 1969, Maryland’s transfer tax, a small tax on real estate transactions, was the nation’s first dedicated funding source for land conservation. We know how lucky we are in Maryland to have Program Open Space as a tool for protecting natural resources and driving natural resource economies state-wide. Program Open Space funds the acquisition and development of state and local parks, the preservation of unique natural areas, the preservation of farmland using agricultural easements through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), and the protection of locally identified resource lands (farm, forest, historic/cultural) with easements through the Rural Legacy Program. For example, the Rural Legacy Program funds the Harriet Tubman Rural Legacy Area. This 28,300 acre area protects the landscape that played such a key part of Harriet Tubman’s inspirational story.

We must emphasize that Program Open Space has been consistently and repeatedly borne the brunt of diversions and reductions for well over 20 years. In fact, roughly \$600 million has been diverted from the fund and not repaid. As an innovative market driven program, Program Open Space adjusts to actual real estate market conditions. Diversions “override” the Program and have an exacerbated effect.

The Conservation Fund and the land trust community as a whole stand ready with untapped capacity to help. From a nationwide perspective, Maryland’s Program Open Space is highly regarded as a visionary and innovative market driven Program. Please allow Program Open Space to operate as intended. The Conservation Fund **urges the Committee to strongly opposes the Department of Legislative Services recommendation to divert funding from Maryland’s land preservation programs.**

# **Testimony\_969300-AgConsEnvNatRes\_20250225.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brian Wort

Position: UNF

## POSITION STATEMENT

### House Bill 352

Hearing on the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Thursday, February 27

1:00 PM

Department of Legislative Services Building, Joint Hearing Room, Annapolis, MD

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committees,

I, Brian Wort, Farm Manager at P.A. Bowen Farmstead, strongly urge your Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15, 00 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

We at P.A. Bowen Farmstead have utilized SMADC's services for over twelve years, including MANY educational workshops/events, and grants for installing our livestock fencing when we first started and a hoophouse for garden vegetables. We've been able to accept Maryland Market Money at the Anne

Arundel County Farmers Market through SMADC's programs, enabling our healthy products to reach more of our lower-income neighbors.

SMADC's value goes far beyond just providing grants. Their Southern Maryland Meats program helps build awareness of our farm and offerings to the community at large, giving us a leg up finding customers for our products. Their annual Holiday Shopping Guide brings people from the whole DelMarVa region to our area for holiday shopping. Their dedication to keeping us all informed of Everything Agriculture in Maryland is unparalleled with any other agency. I know several young new farmers that have been given not only grant opportunities to help them build their business but also the education, knowledge, and support necessary to implement their endeavors.

When the COVID pandemic hit and all the grocery stores ran out of food, who fed our residents? Maryland's small local farms. While most people complained about being bored during the lockdowns, we've never worked as hard as we did then to serve our communities. In an age of increased focus on food security, cutting funding from the hands that feed us is not a prudent decision.

*Most Maryland residents wouldn't even know there are farms in Prince George's County without SMADC.*

**We emphatically ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Wort  
Farm Manager / Cheesemaker  
LEAD Maryland Fellow, Class XII

P.A. Bowen Farmstead  
(301) 579-2727  
PABowenFarmstead.com  
facebook.com/pabowenfarmstead  
Instagram: @PABowenFarmstead

# **Support Letter SMADC Funding 2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chi-Ming Wang

Position: UNF

## POSITION STATEMENT

Senate Bill 321  
Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025  
Senate's Budget and Taxation Committee  
Hearing 2/28 at 12:00 p.m.

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and other Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Chi Wang of Freshfarm.

I strongly urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15, 00 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

As part of the market staff for Freshfarm, I am at the Downtown Silver Spring Farmers Market almost every week of the year and see the impact SMADC makes in the community. From coordinating the Maryland Money Market program, training individuals to use the Healthy Together application for

SFMNP and providing training for farmers. The impact is seen with the youngest Marylanders with WIC, to the most senior with SFMNP, and all in between with MMM. This funding affects all Marylanders and will have a lasting consumer impact not just through the funds, but will leave a void for the farming community and future potential farmers in Maryland.

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chi Wang  
Freshfarm

## **HB352 Unfavorable RMF.pdf**

Uploaded by: DANIEL RIDER

Position: UNF



**POSITION STATEMENT: UNFAVORABLE**

House Bill 352

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

House Committees: Appropriations, and Ways & Means

Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.

February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs Barnes and Atterbeary, Vice Chairs Chang and Wilkins, and the Distinguished Members of the Committees,

**I'm writing as President of the Rural Maryland Foundation to urge fully restoring the original budget for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC).**

Our purpose is to support the efforts of citizens and governments to meet the economic and social needs of rural Maryland. We are deliberately structured as a non-profit to provide the maximum opportunity to support our partners in addressing the challenges and opportunities for rural Maryland.

SMADC is a key partner, and consistently so. There is no other organization focused on agricultural and natural resource based economic development opportunities that has the flexibility to provide the financial assistance of loans and grants, the technical assistance typical of an economic development office and the engagement of the many and diverse communities of interest that altogether comprise what we know to be "rural Maryland".

Every dollar allocated from the Cigarette Restitution fund leverages \$2 additional fund. Of all the various ways the Cigarette Restitution fund is invested, the \$1 million provided to SMADC is the only portion of the Fund that is focused on creating jobs and business opportunities for the region.

Defunding SMADC will result in the loss of that special nucleus of community engagement and services found only in southern Maryland. We need more of SMADC, and more organizations like SMADC – not less. There is no other organization that can fill the void that would be left.

We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Daniel Rider*

Daniel R. Rider

President

Rural Maryland Foundation

# **Testimony - House - SMADC BUDGET. Community FarmSh**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Freeman

Position: UNF

## POSITION STATEMENT

### House Bill 352

Hearing on the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Thursday, February 27

1:00 PM

Department of Legislative Services Building, Joint Hearing Room, Annapolis, MD

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Jennifer Freeman

Executive Director

Community FarmShare

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committees,

I strongly urge your Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15,000 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

Community FarmShare's experience with SMADC and the Maryland Market Money program has been extremely positive. In 2024, we started 4 mobile farm markets which accept SNAP and therefore purchases are able to be matched with MMM. We heard very positive feedback from residents who used the program to be able to buy such first quality produce at affordable prices - and with the markets located right in the communities where people live - it was a win-win-win for all. Going forward, we are exploring offering online SNAP purchases, which again, it is incredibly valuable if they can be matched by MD Market Money, which is key to affordable healthy fresh produce access in vulnerable communities.

Especially in these most uncertain times, SMADC's role in facilitating that healthy food is accessible for residents most in need of nutritious local produce is beyond vital as a basic human need.

Further, the team at SMADC is incredible. They are so knowledgeable, very responsive and always ready to support wherever needed. They are true food systems and farm advocates. We at Community FarmShare are incredibly grateful for all they do. Please continue to fund this very important work that they do.

Please reinstate full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget. This work is vital for communities, critical for local farms and a vital part of local food system.

We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Freeman", written in a cursive style.

Jennifer Freeman

Executive Director

Community FarmShare

# **Opposition to House Bill 352 - Joe Sam Swann.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joe Sam Swann

Position: UNF

## POSITION STATEMENT

### House Bill 352

Hearing on the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Thursday, February 27

1:00 PM

Department of Legislative Services Building, Joint Hearing Room, Annapolis, MD

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committees,

My name is Joe Sam Swann, and I am the owner Swann Farms U-Pick Berries and Produce.

I strongly urge your Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15,000 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

As the owner of Swann Farms U-Pick Berries and Produce, I have greatly benefited from the technical support and educational resources provided by SMADC. Their assistance has empowered farmers like

myself to enhance our production methods and improve efficiency. Moreover, SMADC actively promotes market development, facilitating connections with local buyers that are crucial for our sales. The networking opportunities they create allow us to exchange valuable insights and strategies with fellow farmers. By championing local products, SMADC helps stimulate consumer demand, and their commitment to advocating for policies that support transitioning farmers is vital for our continued success.

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe Sam Swann

Southern Maryland Farmer

Owner, Swann Farms U-Pick Berries and Produce

# **SMADC.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kelly Dudeck

Position: UNF





value-added agriculture + craft alcohol manufacturing + agritourism

**POSITION STATEMENT**

**Senate Bill 321**

**Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**

**House Appropriations Committee & House Ways and Means Committee**

**Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.**

February 26, 2025

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and other Distinguished Members of the Committees,

My name is Kelly Dudeck, and I serve as the Principal at Cultivate + Craft, an organization dedicated to fostering Maryland's craft beverage and value-added agriculture industries. Cultivate + Craft works statewide to support the development and growth of these industries by providing technical assistance, business development resources, and advocating for policies that enhance agricultural entrepreneurship. We collaborate frequently with SMADC, particularly in areas related to cottage and acidified foods, to ensure that small-scale food producers have the support they need to thrive.

I strongly urge the House Appropriations Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC. It is existing funding that comes into the state annually from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF), of which 5% was promised to SMADC twenty years ago upon their creation during the Tobacco Buyout.

The CRF itself is continual and non-lapsing. These funds are directed either to the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department receives approximately \$108 million a year from this fund alone, plus additional funding. SMADC is simply requesting its fair share—\$1 million annually—as determined by the Maryland Legislature in a bipartisan bill passed just last session. This funding is essential to ensuring that SMADC can continue to

support farmers in Southern Maryland and across the state who are growing healthy food and fostering a thriving agricultural economy.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This reduction will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the statewide farming programs that SMADC promotes.

Full funding is essential for supporting the agricultural economy, small business innovation, and food and farming education. Last fiscal year, SMADC leveraged its \$900,000 base funding to secure over \$2 million in additional grant funding for the region—a significant return on investment.

SMADC's impact is tangible. In FY24 alone, they:

- Awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants totaling \$60,000
- Provided scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050
- Awarded \$15,000 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program
- Expanded the Maryland Market Money program to over 60 farmers' market locations, benefiting more than 720 farmers and producers
- Directly supported 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events

As someone who works closely with farmers, value-added producers, and craft beverage businesses, I have seen firsthand how SMADC's programs strengthen Maryland's agricultural economy. Their support has been instrumental in connecting farmers with new markets, promoting regional branding efforts, and ensuring that value-added agriculture remains a viable economic driver in Southern Maryland and beyond. Without full funding, these essential programs and the farmers who rely on them will suffer.

I respectfully urge you to advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the upcoming budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Kelly Dudeck**

Principal, Cultivate + Craft

# **SB321 FRESHFARM Support Letter SMADC Funding 2025.**

Uploaded by: Nick Stavelly

Position: UNF

## POSITION STATEMENT

Senate Bill 321

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Senate's Budget and Taxation Committee

Hearing 2/28 at 12:00 p.m.

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and other Distinguished Members of the Committee,

My name is Nick Stavely and I am the Director of Incentive Programs for FRESHFARM. We develop innovative ways to solve critical problems across our regional food system and connect people to their food through hands-on education, farmers markets, and food distribution programs. FRESHFARM has operated the Downtown Silver Spring Farmers Market in Silver Spring, Maryland since 2005, in addition to more than 20 farmers markets throughout the DMV, and has worked closely with the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) to support the Maryland Market Money program since 2020.

I strongly urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to support the reinstatement of full funding for the SMADC, as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15, 00 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly

served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

The Maryland Market Money program has historically had a deeply positive impact on the Downtown Silver Spring Market, facilitating over \$205,000 in federal benefit and incentive spending on locally grown produce and foods since 2022. SMADC and MMM put money back into the local economy and create food access for all.

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nick Stavely', written in a cursive style.

Nick Stavely, Director

FRESHFARM

## **HB0352 - Funding.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sabrina Dobbins

Position: UNF

February 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup>

**HB 0352 – Appropriations Committee Agriculture/Conservation/Environment/Natural Resources**

Dear Committee Chairs and esteemed members of the committee,

My name is Sabrina Dobbins, and I am a small farmer in St. Mary's County Maryland. I raise La Mancha dairy goats and create value-added products utilizing the milk from my herd of goats.

In 2019, I stumbled upon the Buy Local Challenge event hosted by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission. I thought this would be an amazing opportunity to showcase my locally grown and locally made products. I applied and was accepted to attend this event. This event had an incredible impact on me as a small business. Not only was this the most financially successful event I had attended but I also I networked with other vendors, creating a lasting network of fellow small farm producers. Almost every year after that, I attended this event as a vendor and continued to grow my network of like-minded farmers.

In early 2024, I had the opportunity to apply with the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission for the Agriculture Program Coordinator. I was fortunate to interview and accept that position. After accepting this position, I dedicated my professional life to farmers in Southern Maryland. As my role at SMADC, I work tirelessly with farmers and producers offering mini-grants, regulatory assistance and event planning for workshops and other outreach events that reach both urban and rural farmers in Southern Maryland.

As the coordinator for SMADC's mini grant program, we have had over 230 applications and over \$300,000 distributed to Southern Maryland farmers since the origination of the program in 2017. For fiscal year 2025, we have an additional \$60,000 to disperse to the Southern Maryland Region. Just in my time at SMADC since May, I have provided regulatory assistance to over two dozen Southern Maryland Farmers with assistance on acidified food inspections for 4 Amish or Mennonite producers. In FY24', almost 400 farmers or producers attended a workshop or event.

It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is currently 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.

The CRF fund itself is continually and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their

additional funding. SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.

I strongly urge the Committee to reinstate full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices. We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Dobbins

Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission



# **SMADC Support Letter-MAFRAC (Final Draft).pdf**

Uploaded by: Serge Thomas

Position: UNF



**1177 Annapolis Road  
Unit 101  
Odenton, MD 21113  
(240)501-0199**

**POSITION STATEMENT**

Senate Bill 321

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Senate's Budget and Taxation Committee

Hearing 2/28 at 12:00 p.m.

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and other Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I, Serge Thomas (Strategic Support Specialist) & Carla Cash (Executive Director), of the Mid Atlantic Food Resilience & Access Coalition (MAFRAC) strongly urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15,000 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-

[www.mafrac.org](http://www.mafrac.org)

[www.instagram.com/mafrac\\_community](https://www.instagram.com/mafrac_community)

[www.facebook.com/mafraccommunity](https://www.facebook.com/mafraccommunity)



**1177 Annapolis Road  
Unit 101  
Odenton, MD 21113  
(240)501-0199**

income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

MAFRAC is an organization made up hunger relief organizations (HRO's), local farmers and food producers, healthcare providers and other nonprofits working in the areas of food insecurity, agriculture/economic development operating in the Washington, DC metro area. We also partner with other organizations who work in the food insecurity field, having relationships with many such organizations in the State of Maryland.

Food Insecurity is a reality in Maryland, with more than 600,000 residents experiencing periods where it's difficult to feed themselves or their families. We recently partnered with SMADC on a grant from the Growing Justice Fund, where we wanted provide the Charles County Public Schools with cold storage lockers critical to the provision and maintenance of food for needy students and their families. We are also grateful for SMADC for allowing us to partner with several of their farms in their network in providing good food to many of our hunger relief organizations.

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Serge Thomas & Carla Cash

Mid Atlantic Food Resilience & Access Coalition (MAFRAC)

[www.mafrac.org](http://www.mafrac.org)  
[www.instagram.com/mafrac\\_community](https://www.instagram.com/mafrac_community)  
[www.facebook.com/mafraccommunity](https://www.facebook.com/mafraccommunity)

# **SMADC Support Testimony-MAFRAC.pdf**

Uploaded by: Serge Thomas

Position: UNF

## SMADC Support Testimony

Hello Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the committee. My name is Serge Thomas, and I am the Strategic Support Specialist for the Mid Atlantic Food Resilience & Access Coalition (MAFRAC), and we are partners with the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC).

I am here today to strongly urge you to **reinstate full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)**. The proposed \$250,000 cut in the FY26 budget would significantly harm the vital programs SMADC administers—programs that directly support Maryland farmers, strengthen our rural economy, and ensure food access for our communities.

- **Community Fridges & Food Security:** SMADC has been instrumental in launching **community fridge programs** in Southern Maryland, helping to provide free, fresh food to those in need while reducing food waste. These efforts strengthen food access networks and promote sustainability. MAFRAC and SMADC recently wrote a joint grant application to the Growing Justice Fund for this program for their efforts to support the Charles County Public Schools.
- **The Buy Local Challenge & Celebration Event:** SMADC hosts the **Buy Local Challenge**, which encourages consumers to support Maryland farmers. This event **directly engages thousands of residents and producers, generating economic benefits across the region**. MAFRAC offers a similar program in our region, offering matching grants to hunger relief organizations-encouraging recipients to buy local and strengthen our local economy.

In summary, SMADC is an essential driver of agricultural innovation, economic development, and food security in Maryland. **The \$250,000 funding cut would severely impact farmers, families, and food access programs statewide.**

I respectfully urge this committee to **reinstate SMADC's full \$1 million funding allocation**, as originally intended and reaffirmed by the Maryland Legislature. The return on investment is undeniable, and the impact on our state's agricultural community is profound.

Thank you for your time and for considering this critical request.

# **House Testimony HB352 - SMADC.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shelby Watson-Hampton

Position: UNF

**POSITION STATEMENT - House Bill 352**

Hearing on the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Thursday, February 27 1:00 PM

Department of Legislative Services Building, Joint Hearing Room, Annapolis, MD

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committees,

My name is Shelby Watson-Hampton, and I'm the Director of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), which is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. SMADC's serves farms, farmers, and small rural businesses mostly in the 5 SOMD Counties, but we also have several statewide programs as well.

I am strongly urging your committees to please support the reinstatement of full funding for SMADC as we play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is also NOT taxpayer dollars, as it comes from a special fund that comes into the state every year from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF).** The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide. Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15, 00 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shelby Watson-Hampton

Director, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)

[swatsonhampton@smadc.com](mailto:swatsonhampton@smadc.com)

## **Unfavorable Letters of Support and Supporting Docu**

Uploaded by: Shelby Watson-Hampton

Position: UNF



# SMADC is valuable to Maryland



SMADC serves

**2,022 FARMS &  
205,000 ACRES**

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

## SMADC'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN FY'24

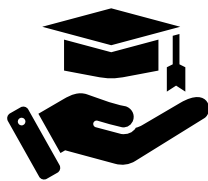


**448 FARMS**

directly benefited from SMADC  
marketing, resources, and events.



**30 Farms Awarded  
SMADC Mini Grants  
totaling \$60,000**



**\$10,388**

awarded through SMADC  
scholarships & sponsorships



**\$15,000**

awarded to regional youth through  
Southern Maryland Meats sponsorships



**21** SMADC workshops  
& events

**+ 800** 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 2 million dollars (in both state and non-state grand funds) dedicated to ag. programs that enhance the region's economic viability.

## MARYLAND MARKET MONEY



**64+ FARM MARKETS  
& FARM STANDS**

including 26 So. MD locations



**\$1,165,966**

awarded to MMM program

**\$567,849**



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](https://www.smadc.com) OR CONNECT WITH US





## **POSITION STATEMENT**

House Bill 352

Hearing on the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Thursday, February 27

1:00 PM

Department of Legislative Services Building, Joint Hearing Room, Annapolis, MD

**February 25, 2025**

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committees,

Scott Sanders – Founding Partner of Tobacco Barn Distillery.

I strongly urge your Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15, 00 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

Include some of your own experience with SMADC and how you see this impacting the community.

We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Sanders  
Founding Partner  
Tobacco Barn Distillery

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair  
Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
Appropriations Committee

**RE: House Bill 0352 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025  
Budget reduction to Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)**

Position: **OPPOSE**

Chairs Atterbeary and Barnes, Vice Chairs Wilkins and Chang, and Distinguished Members of the Committees:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors for the Prince George's Soil Conservation District (District), we strongly urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). This organization plays a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**This is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF, which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed in the 2023 Legislative Session.** These funds will continue to support Southern Maryland farmers who are growing healthy food that promote healthy communities.

The Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide. Full funding is essential for supporting the agricultural economy, small business innovation, and food and farming education.

**In the last fiscal year, with just \$900,000 in base funding, SMADC was able to leverage that to bring in over \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the Southern Maryland region. This is a significant return on investment and a superb example how sound fiscal management can leverage taxpayer dollars.**

SMADC's success has been proven year after year. For example, in FY24 alone, they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling over \$10,000, awarded \$15,000 to young farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, events, and much more through all of our active programming.

The farm mini grants are vital to new and beginning farmers and farmers of color in Southern Maryland. The District has written many letters of support for Prince George's County farmers as they apply for the SMADC farm mini-grants.

The District itself, has been a recipient of one of SMADC's Regional Agriculture Project (RAP) grants to restore a failing tobacco barn so it could be repurposed for other agricultural uses.

The buying guides, the support for "Buy Local" and the extra effort that the management and staff of SMADC provide to the five Southern Maryland County farm communities is immeasurable and must be FULLY supported.

Agriculture is under attack and we must stand firm in our commitment to support organizations such as SMADC.

**We ask that you please reinstate full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the upcoming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Steven E. Darcey, CPESC  
District Manager

Cc: Board of Supervisors

**POSITION STATEMENT**  
**HB352**  
Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and other Distinguished Members of the Committees,

My name is Micheal Bryan, and I represent LifeStream Church of the Nazarene Food Pantry in Charles County Maryland. Our pantry is operated by volunteers, and we are a client choice healthy food focused pantry. In 2024 during the months of January through August we averaged 164 families per month. In September through December, we averaged 307 families per month. We believe that this increase in great part, can be attributed to the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission's coordination with local farmers to help us have more fresh produce and fruits at our distributions.

I strongly urge the Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

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Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment, which does not include the 100s of hours put in by volunteer-based organizations such as ours, in working with farmers, collecting and distributing healthy locally grown foods.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15,000 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served

448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

For our pantry it took over five years of effort to figure out how to consistently get locally grown, healthy foods for distributions. For us, our partnership with SMADC was the missing partner to make this happen. A reduction of SMADC funding will not only impact Southern Maryland farmers, but it will also impact the community that non-profits such as us serve when we try to deliver meaningful amounts of local fresh produce and fruit. In fact, we have been so encouraged by SMADC's ability to help us promote healthier communities, we entered into a MOU with SMADC to be the second community fridge location within Charles County. Thanks to their help and donations from our members we officially opened the Community Fridge on February 21, 2025

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Micheal Bryan

LifeStream Church of the Nazarene, Waldorf MD



**POSITION STATEMENT**  
HB352  
Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committees,

I am Marcia Cosmas-Monnett, family member of Monnett Farms, Calvert County, MD; where my nephew and his family raise beef, goats, and sheep for local meat sales.

I strongly urge the Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

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Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15, 00 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcia Cosmas-Monnett

3951 Sunrise Drive, Huntingtown, MD 20638

**POSITION STATEMENT**

HB352

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and other Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I'm writing as President of the Rural Maryland Foundation to urge fully restoring the original budget for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission.

Our purpose is to support the efforts of citizens and governments to meet the economic and social needs of rural Maryland. We are deliberately structured as a non-profit to provide the maximum opportunity to support our partners in addressing the challenges and opportunities for rural Maryland.

SMADC is a key partner, and consistently so. There is no other organization focused on agricultural and natural resource based economic development opportunities that has the flexibility to provide the financial assistance of loans and grants, the technical assistance typical of an economic development office and the engagement of the many and diverse communities of interest that altogether comprise what we know to be "rural Maryland".

Every dollar allocated from the Cigarette Restitution fund leverages \$2 additional fund. Of all the various ways the Cigarette Restitution fund is invested, the \$1 million provided to SMADC is the only portion of the Fund that is focused on creating jobs and business opportunities for the region.

Defunding SMADC will result in the loss of that special nucleus of community engagement and services found only in southern Maryland. We need more of SMADC, and more organizations like SMADC – not less. There is no other organization that can fill the void that would be left.

We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel R. Rider  
President  
Rural Maryland Foundation

POSITION STATEMENT  
HB352  
**Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and other Distinguished Members of the Committee,

My name is Chip Bowling, Charles County Farmer

I strongly urge the Committee to support the reinstatement of the full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note the this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from the CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF which is \$1 million dollars annually as decided by the Maryland Legislature in the bi-partisan bill passed just last session – so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promoted statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15,000 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of the active programming.

I've been involved in SMADC since it was formed when we took the Tobacco buyout. SMADC has helped hundreds of farmers and small business owners over the years. Its work is vital to our local Southern Maryland economy.

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Chip Bowling  
Bowling Agri-Service, Inc.



February 25, 2025

Shelby Watson-Hampton, Director  
Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)  
15045 Burnt Store Road  
Hughesville, MD 20637

MD SNAP-Ed is pleased to support the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) as a key partner in our work to support access to healthy foods across the state. In our existing collaborative work with the Maryland Market Money (MMM) and SMADC, we recognize the importance of supporting farmers and food-insecure Marylanders through increased access to local food purchase points which accept nutrition benefits and crucial incentive programs such as MMM which provide a dollar-for-dollar match for purchases made using federal nutrition benefits. In our programming, we also rely on being able to work in tandem with the type of technical assistance and capacity building that is provided through SMADC's support for farmers in Maryland.

Since Maryland SNAP-Ed's collaborations with farmers focus on making connections with benefits customers, SMADC has been a natural partner continuation of our work, expanding their opportunities to maximize their reach with low-income Marylanders. To make progress on expanding the use of federal nutrition benefits with local Maryland producers, it's critical to remove barriers to participation for farmers markets, farmers market vendors, and direct-marketing farmers. Our long-standing work with SMADC has been focused on that task and is seeing results. In the past year, in large part due to SMADC's programs and support for farmers who accept benefits, several small scale Maryland farmers have been newly authorized to accept SNAP benefits. A deciding factor for many of them was hearing about the financial and technical support available to them through SMADC's Maryland Market Money program. According to the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), each dollar in federally funded SNAP purchases generates \$1.79 in economic activity. In SNAP-Ed's work with farmers, many mention that access to doubling funds through MMM is key to enabling their participation in federal nutrition benefits programs, benefitting the low income customers and securing the impact of federally funded programs to fuel local economic activity.

Our work to support farmers and farmers markets is greatly facilitated by having a state-based partner in SMADC who can provide full-wrap around support from technical assistance, marketing and doubling funds. Each of those elements work together to magnify their impact.

These are important and timely endeavors, and a fully funded partner is essential to continue to make a positive impact in our work together to support access to healthy, local food.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lachenmayr  
Director Maryland SNAP-Ed



## POSITION STATEMENT

HB352

Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and other Distinguished Members of the Committees,

My name is Priscilla Leitch. I am a St. Mary's County resident where I also own a specialty cut flower business, Anchored Roots Farm LLC. We grow cut flowers for florists, weddings and events, and on farm sales.

I strongly urge the Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund alone, plus their additional funding. **SMADC just requests their fair share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone they awarded 30 Farm Mini-Grants to the community totaling \$60,000, awarded scholarships and sponsorships totaling \$10,050, awarded \$15,000 to youth farmers in the SOMD Meats Program, grew the Maryland Market Money matching program for low-income families at the farmers market to 60+ locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more.

Over the last twelve years I have been involved in the agriculture community and with SMADC as a new and beginning farmer, and young farmer in the region. I've witnessed first hand how SMADC has helped



to support the transition from tobacco to new and innovative industries in agriculture, which has made it possible for us next generation of farmers to succeed and preserve our rural character in southern Maryland through continued profitability from the agriculture industry. Without SMADC, we would have lost a significant amount of land dedicated to farming by now, and continued to lose the next generation of farmers, which is a problem not just in Maryland, but across the country. In St. Mary's County the most recent 2022 Ag Census shows that the average age of the farmer is lower in our county than the national average. On our farm we grow and sell cut flowers and we have been successful due to the education, workshops, mini grants (matching funds), and marketing that SMADC provides directly to farmers in the Southern Maryland region.

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Leitch

Anchored Roots Farm LLC

240-925-7156



## POSITION STATEMENT

### House Bill 352

Hearing on the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025

Thursday, February 27

1:00 PM

Department of Legislative Services Building, Joint Hearing Room, Annapolis, MD

February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Committees,

I, Brian Wort, Farm Manager at P.A. Bowen Farmstead, strongly urge your Committees to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

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Full funding 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 \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

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We at P.A. Bowen Farmstead have utilized SMADC's services for over twelve years, including MANY educational workshops/events, and grants for installing our livestock fencing when we first started and a hoophouse for garden vegetables. We've been able to accept Maryland Market Money at the Anne

Arundel County Farmers Market through SMADC's programs, enabling our healthy products to reach more of our lower-income neighbors.

SMADC's value goes far beyond just providing grants. Their Southern Maryland Meats program helps build awareness of our farm and offerings to the community at large, giving us a leg up finding customers for our products. Their annual Holiday Shopping Guide brings people from the whole DelMarVa region to our area for holiday shopping. Their dedication to keeping us all informed of Everything Agriculture in Maryland is unparalleled with any other agency. I know several young new farmers that have been given not only grant opportunities to help them build their business but also the education, knowledge, and support necessary to implement their endeavors.

When the COVID pandemic hit and all the grocery stores ran out of food, who fed our residents? Maryland's small local farms. While most people complained about being bored during the lockdowns, we've never worked as hard as we did then to serve our communities. In an age of increased focus on food security, cutting funding from the hands that feed us is not a prudent decision.

*Most Maryland residents wouldn't even know there are farms in Prince George's County without SMADC.*

**We emphatically ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Wort  
Farm Manager / Cheesemaker  
LEAD Maryland Fellow, Class XII

P.A. Bowen Farmstead  
(301) 579-2727  
PABowenFarmstead.com  
facebook.com/pabowenfarmstead  
Instagram: @PABowenFarmstead

# **Signed Letter HB 352 SMADC Funding.pdf**

Uploaded by: Steven Darcey

Position: UNF



**PRINCE GEORGE'S**  
**SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

5301 Marlboro Race Track Road, Ste. 100 Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Phone (301) 574-5162x3 Fax 1-855-416-9660

[www.pgscd.org](http://www.pgscd.org) [pgscd@co.pg.md.us](mailto:pgscd@co.pg.md.us)

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair  
Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
Appropriations Committee

**RE: House Bill 0352 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**  
**Budget reduction to Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)**

Position: **OPPOSE**

Chairs Atterbeary and Barnes, Vice Chairs Wilkins and Chang, and Distinguished Members of the Committees:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors for the Prince George's Soil Conservation District (District), we strongly urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). This organization plays a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices.

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The Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide. Full funding is essential for supporting the agricultural economy, small business innovation, and food and farming education.

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The farm mini grants are vital to new and beginning farmers and farmers of color in Southern Maryland. The District has written many letters of support for Prince George's County farmers as they apply for the SMADC farm mini-grants.

The District itself, has been a recipient of one of SMADC's Regional Agriculture Project (RAP) grants to restore a failing tobacco barn so it could be repurposed for other agricultural uses.

The buying guides, the support for "Buy Local" and the extra effort that the management and staff of SMADC provide to the five Southern Maryland County farm communities is immeasurable and must be FULLY supported.

Agriculture is under attack and we must stand firm in our commitment to support organizations such as SMADC.

**We ask that you please reinstate full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the upcoming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Steven E. Darcey, CPESC  
District Manager

Cc: Board of Supervisors

# **SMADC Support-HB0352-MAEF.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susanne Richards

Position: UNF



## **Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation Position Statement House Bill 0352 – Budget Reconciliation & Financing Act of 2025**

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**Date: February 25, 2025**

**Unfavorable**

Submitted to: House Ways & Means and Appropriations Committees

Submitted by: Susanne Richards, Executive Director, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc.

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### **To the Chairs and Members of the Committees:**

MAEF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting agricultural education and agricultural literacy, which in turn benefits the agricultural community in Maryland.

Agriculture is the state's largest commercial industry, part of a resource-based economy with an economic impact of \$20.2 billion each year, supporting more than 88,600 Maryland jobs and generating nearly \$755.2 million in state and local businesses. It is an economic powerhouse that fuels our rural communities and the state's economy.

**It is an industry that represents the very foundation this state** since its beginning and continues to sustain it generations later.

For many years, MAEF has partnered with the **Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission**, known as "SMADC," on agricultural education and literacy initiatives.

**We strongly urge the Committee to restore full funding for SMADC in the budget.** SMADC funding originates from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF), which was created 20 years ago during the Tobacco Buyout. The CRF is a continual and non-lapsing fund which supports the Maryland Department of Health (~\$108M) and SMADC (~\$1M).

While the number of people actively engaged in farming is relatively small, it is now growing, thanks to renewed interest and an increasing number of smaller and suburban farms. Whether large farm or "farmette," there is a shared need for educational resources

- to support these businesses,
- ensure a thriving and safe local food supply,
- and effectively steward our rural land, water and air.

**SMADC has been an important player** in educating aspiring farmers, building new markets for crops, supporting the farm community in diversifying their crops, and helping the general public

understand the value of agriculture to their local food supply, the economy, environment and quality of life.

**SMADC's efforts are actively building new rural businesses** which benefit the state through sales, income and property taxes while strengthening the fabric of our rural communities.

**Please restore full funding for SMADC in this and future years** so that their important work may continue. Thank you.

Susanne Richards  
Executive Director, MAEF  
[susanne@maefonline.com](mailto:susanne@maefonline.com)  
(410) 430-2613



# **SMADC - Feb 2025 budget bill - House.pdf**

Uploaded by: Vanessa A. Finney

Position: UNF



February 25, 2025

## **Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025**

Committee: Appropriations Committee

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and other Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I represent the Farms and Food Access for a Resilient Maryland Foundation, Inc., known as FFARMD. FFARMD was established as a 501(c)3 in 2022 with mission to support access to nutritious, locally grown foods for food-insecure Marylanders. In this capacity, FFARMD supports and works with the Maryland Market Money (MMM) program, which falls under the operational jurisdiction of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC).

I strongly urge the Appropriations Committee to support the reinstatement of full funding for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), as they play a pivotal role in supporting local farmers, promoting agricultural education, expanding the local rural economy, and fostering sustainable practices, through many programs, only one of which is the Maryland Market Money program.

**It is important to note that this is not new funding for SMADC, it is 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.**

The CRF fund itself is continual and non-lapsing and these funds that come into the State are directed to either the Maryland Department of Health or to SMADC. The Health Department gets approximately \$108 million a year from this CRF fund, plus their additional funding. **SMADC requests its full share of the CRF – which is \$1 million dollars annually, as decided by the Maryland Legislature in a bi-partisan bill passed just last Session** - so they can continue to support the farmers in their region and across the state who are growing healthy food and a healthy community.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed Budget Bill now cuts \$250,000 from SMADC funding for FY26. This will deeply impact the agricultural community in Southern Maryland, as well as the farming programs that SMADC promotes statewide.

Full funding is essential for supporting food access, the agricultural economy, small business innovation, and food and farming education. **It is worth noting that last fiscal year, with just \$900,000 in base funding, SMADC was able to leverage that to bring in over \$2 million additional dollars in grants to the region. This is a significant return on investment.**

SMADC's success has been proven. In FY24 alone it grew the Maryland Market Money matching program to benefit 10,000 food-insecure Marylanders at farmers market in more than 60 locations and over 720 farmers/producers, directly served 448 farms through grants, marketing, resources, and events, and much more through all of our active programming.

**The loss of SMADC funding will threaten the ability of the Maryland Market Money program to seamlessly continue its work to weekly connect thousands of food-insecure Marylanders with fresh, locally produced food.**

**We ask that you please advocate for reinstating full funding of \$1 million for SMADC in the coming budget.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Vanessa A. Finney  
Chief Administrative Officer  
FFARMD

## **Testimony**

Uploaded by: Kacey Wetzel

Position: INFO



## House Bill 0352 Budget and Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 (Fiscal Year 2026) Written Testimony

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**Date: February 27, 2025**

Submitted to: the House Appropriations Committee and Ways and Means Committee

Submitted by: Kacey Wetzel, Vice President of Outreach and Education; Dr. Jana Davis, President, Chesapeake Bay Trust

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The Chesapeake Bay Trust (Bay Trust), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit grant-maker, was established by the General Assembly in 1985 to complement the work of state agencies by harnessing the desire and power of community-based groups to contribute to natural resource improvements. The Bay Trust's method is to empower groups by providing them with the ability to lead their own work, mainly through grants. In FY25, the Bay Trust will issue about \$30 million via 450 grants from the Youghiogheny watershed in Western Maryland to the Coastal Bays and everywhere in between.

The two main sources of revenue to support these grants (and our operations) had historically been only via the Chesapeake Bay vehicle license plate and Chesapeake and Endangered Species Fund tax checkoff. In the early 2000s, because of the Bay Trust's efficiency (over 90 cents of every dollar goes to programs), other entities began to ask the organization to manage their funds as well. Examples are federal, state, and local governments; family foundations; and private corporations. In 2021 and 2022, the General Assembly similarly tapped the Trust to create/expand two programs with the appropriations before you today:

- 1) The Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021 called upon the Trust to create and administer the \$10 million/year (through FY31) Urban Tree Grant Program component of the state 5 million tree goal.
- 2) The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 called upon the Trust to expand the existing Chesapeake Conservation Corps to include climate and climate justice work with an additional \$1.5 million/year.

### Urban Trees Grant Program (Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021)

The Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021 created a grant program to offer resources (money and assistance) to urban underserved communities to plant trees. The act mandates an appropriation of \$10 million annually for 9 fiscal years. Urban trees and community green spaces have a myriad of benefits, including air quality improvements, heat island effect mitigation, stormwater absorption, climate change mitigation and adaptation, various



physical and mental health benefits, business district benefits, and improved community livability for many other reasons.

The Trust was tapped to create and manage this program because of the organization's history of funding urban greening and tree planting work. In the first three years of the program (FY23-25), the Trust received \$36 million in requests and awarded \$25.8 million through 123 grants to plant 74,724 trees in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Washington, and Wicomico Counties. In addition, investments have been made to ensure that biologically diverse tree stock will be available for future grantees by nurseries. Over 1,000 jobs have been created with not-for-profit grantee organizations, contractors hired to plant the trees, and nursery staff.



The Request for Proposals for the Urban Trees Program is open now, with a due date for applicants in March. We provide significant assistance to potential applicants who need it. Review of those proposals will occur in April, and we anticipate having a final list of grantees in May ready to be notified on July 1 so that they may prepare for a successful fall planting season (fall is the best time of year to plant trees to ensure maximum survivorship.) We hope that as many of the applicants as possible can be supported through full funding as called for in the Governor's budget (\$10 million), and appreciate your consideration.

Previous grantees, as an example of the types of groups who will be identified in Maryland to receive the new FY26 funding, can be found in Attachment 1, and letters of support from some of them for the program can be found in Attachment 2.

More information about the Urban Trees Program can be found at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/urban-trees/>

### **Background on the Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps (Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022)**

The Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps places young people ages 18-25 in year-long, stipend-supported terms of service at host not-for-profit entities across the region. The Corps was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 2010, first proposed by Senate President Mike Miller, and expanded under the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022. Corps members:

- 1) work on a project to advance their Host Organizations' missions in the realms of watershed restoration, energy conservation, climate, climate justice, agriculture, and K-12 environmental education (expanding their Host Organizations' capacity),
- 2) receive life and career skills training, and
- 3) learn to lead their own independent projects (including developing budgets and managing grants).

Host Organizations include environmental and non-environmental entities (e.g., faith institutions, local governments, school systems, civic associations with social missions, etc.) alike.

In its first 15 years, 428 alums have completed the Conservation Corps program. Thirty percent of Corps members are generally immediately hired



by their Host Organizations or another host in the program, many into new jobs that were made possible by the expanded capacity at the Host Organization driven by the Corps member's service. Hundreds of organizations have served as Host Organizations, many of which expanded in size during this period and have filled their staffs with Corps alums.



Over the 15 years of the Corps, members have planted 10,000 trees and 30,000 native plants and engaged 40,000 students and volunteers as part of their 400+ individual capstone projects.

From 2010 to 2023, the Corps was supported only by the Chesapeake Bay Trust's unrestricted revenue (mostly Chesapeake vehicle license plate and tax checkoff funds), a mandated contribution from Maryland DNR, and voluntary contributions from the National Park Service, BGE, and others. For FY24, your committee approved an additional \$1.5 million mandated in the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, which also required an increase in the members' stipends, allowing an expansion of the Corps from 33 members to 50+ members.

Demand for the Chesapeake Conservation Corps has to date exceeded available resources by about double. Last year (2024-2025 Corps year), 145 prospective Corps members applied to serve and 112 not-for-profit entities applied as hosts. For the 2025-2026 Corps class supported by this appropriation, 124 entities applied to serve as hosts with the member deadline in March.

More recently, the Trust has been working with the Governor's new Department of Service and Civic Innovation, which is managing the new Service Year and Maryland Corps programs. Our goal is to coordinate to offer young people seamless Climate Corps opportunities.

More information about the Corps can be found at [www.cbtrust.org/corps](http://www.cbtrust.org/corps).

### **About the Chesapeake Bay Trust**

The Trust was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1985 as a nonprofit grant-making organization with a goal to increase stewardship and engagement in the restoration of the state's local rivers, streams, parks, and other natural resources in diverse communities across the state, from the mountains of Western Maryland and the Youghiogheny watershed to the marshes of the Coastal Bays. The goal was to create an entity that could complement state agency work with groups on the ground: schools, nonprofit organizations, faith-based and reach large institutions, homeowners associations, community and civic associations, and other types of groups.

The Trust invests in local communities and watersheds through grant programs and special initiatives and is known for its efficiency, putting on average 90 cents of every dollar into programs. The Trust has awarded over \$200 million through more than 12,500 grants and projects in every county in Maryland since 1985 ([www.cbtrust.org/impact](http://www.cbtrust.org/impact)). We make about 450 grants and other awards a year and have about 1,000 active grantees at any one time.

The Trust does not receive a direct state appropriation to support its operations, instead supported through revenue from the Chesapeake Bay vehicle license plate; half of the Chesapeake and Endangered Species Fund checkoff on the state income tax form; two new donation options through Maryland's online boating, fishing, hunting license system, one that focuses on veterans' rehabilitation; partnerships with federal, state, local agencies, family foundations, and corporate foundations; and individual donors.



Due to its efficiency, the Trust has been rated with the maximum four-star rating by the nation's leading charity evaluator, Charity Navigator, for more than two decades, putting it in the top 1% of non-profits in the nation.

One of the Trust's basic tenets in its strategic plan is to engage under-engaged audiences in natural resources issues, and that theme characterizes both programs discussed today (Urban Trees and Corps). Every individual in our area benefits from healthy natural resources, and in turn, every individual can help natural resources. Three under-engaged audiences of particular focus identified by our Diversity and Inclusion Committee are the faith-based sector, communities of color, and the human health sector. The Trust has seen much success: The number of students, volunteers, and teachers of color engaged in our grants match the demographics of Maryland. Close to 10% of our grants supported work at faith-based institutions of 13 different religions.



## Attachment 1: FY23-25 Urban Trees Program Grantees Chesapeake Bay Trust

Awardee	Award Amount
3200 Carlisle Block Association, Inc.	\$ 10,409.00
755 Alliance	\$ 41,700.00
Abby Farm	\$ 272,571.00
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay	\$ 306,210.00
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Theta Nu Chapter	\$ 1,000.00
Anne Arundel Watershed Stewards Academy	\$ 54,851.00
Antietam Creek Watershed Alliance (ACWA)	\$ 89,754.00
Ashburton Area Association	\$ 29,193.00
Baltimore County Dept of Environmental Protection & Sustainability	\$ 2,890,001.00
Baltimore Tree Trust	\$ 7,021,238.00
Blue Water Baltimore	\$ 1,037,362.00
Bon Secours Unity Properties	\$ 15,200.00
Broadway East Community Development Corporation	\$ 436,512.00
Carole Highland Neighborhood Association	\$ 48,750.00
Catonsville Rails to Trails	\$ 15,000.00
Central Kenilworth Ave. Revitalization CDC, Inc.	\$ 193,713.00
Chartley Homeowners Association, Inc.	\$ 20,000.00
City Center Residents Association	\$ 15,000.00
City of Bowie	\$ 1,200.00
City of Brunswick	\$ 26,100.00
City of Hagerstown	\$ 126,619.00
City of New Carrollton	\$ 51,875.00
City of Rockville	\$ 381,650.00
City of Salisbury	\$ 148,267.00
Clear Ridge Nursery Inc	\$ 80,925.00
Community College of Baltimore County	\$ 37,784.00
Cottage City	\$ 22,555.00
Defensores de la Cuenca	\$ 1,086,695.00
Delaware Maryland Synod ELCA	\$ 4,859.00
Druid Heights Community Development Corporation	\$ 40,980.00
Eastern Community Church	\$ 82,100.00
Ecotone Inc	\$ 65,000.00
Filbert Street Garden	\$ 2,561.00
Filbert Street Garden	\$ 5,000.00
First Baptist Church of Highland Park	\$ 4,725.00
Franklin Square Community Association	\$ 9,490.00
Fusion Partnership, Inc., c/o Baltimore Gift Economy	\$ 62,179.00
Global Health and Education Projects, Inc.	\$ 508,376.00
Grace Foundation	\$ 43,553.00
Greater Baybrook Alliance	\$ 92,695.00
Greater Remington Improvement Association	\$ 168,000.00
Green Landing Nursery LLC	\$ 175,110.00
GreenTrust Alliance Inc.	\$ 4,394.00

Gunpowder Valley Conservancy	\$ 14,963.00
Hampstead Tree Commission	\$ 2,908.00
Howard County Government	\$ 145,885.00
Howard EcoWorks	\$ 149,882.00
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC)	\$ 451,254.00
Joe's Movement Emporium	\$ 392,333.00
Let's Thrive Baltimore F.K.A. No One Left Unhelped Inc	\$ 45,000.00
Lillie May Carroll Jackson School	\$ 18,500.00
Live Peach Tech	\$ 29,653.00
LowerShore Land Trust	\$ 3,300.00
MedStar Harbor Hospital	\$ 14,000.00
Midtown Community Benefits District	\$ 323,592.00
Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection	\$ 1,613,174.00
Montgomery County Department Of Transportation	\$ 362,740.00
NeighborSpace of Baltimore County, Inc.	\$ 8,594.00
Notre Dame of Maryland University	\$ 76,796.00
Parks & People Foundation	\$ 899,415.00
Patapsco Heritage Greenway, Inc.	\$ 9,934.00
Piscataway Hills Citizens Association (PHCA)	\$ 3,454.00
Preservation Trust of Wicomico, Inc	\$ 15,000.00
Prince George's County Dept of Public Works & Transportation	\$ 2,926,667.00
Prince George's County Department of the Environment	\$ 300,000.00
Quail Valley Homeowners Association	\$ 4,579.00
Resilience Authority of Charles County	\$ 79,822.00
Rev Samuel Green Sr Foundation	\$ 30,500.00
Schott Nurseries LLC	\$ 267,013.00
Shady Grove Homeowners Association	\$ 5,000.00
ShoreRivers	\$ 758,947.00
Southwest community council incorporated dba Citizens of Pigtown	\$ 28,263.00
Takoma Park Mobilization	\$ 16,740.00
Temple X Schools	\$ 14,850.00
The 6th Branch	\$ 112,765.00
The Community Ecology Institute	\$ 3,016.00
The Eastpines Citizens Association Inc	\$ 5,000.00
The New Greenmount West Community Association, Inc.	\$ 51,900.00
The Urban Oasis	\$ 17,720.00
Town of Riverdale Park	\$ 41,875.00
University of Maryland Medical System	\$ 59,098.00
University of Maryland, Baltimore	\$ 39,289.00
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	\$ 329,916.00
Upton Planning Committee	\$ 387,115.00
Vestry Parish Cemetary	\$ 6,300.00
Waldorf School of Baltimore	\$ 30,855.00
Waverly Main Street	\$ 3,153.00
Total	\$ 25,828,763.00

## Attachment 2: Letters of Support

***Veteran Led.  
Community Guided.  
Volunteer Powered.***



November 25, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore  
Governor of Maryland  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Brooke Lierman  
Comptroller of Maryland  
80 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21404

The Honorable Derrick Davis  
Treasurer of Maryland  
80 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21404

### **RE: Support for the Urban Trees Award Program**

Dear Members of the Board of Public Works,

I am writing to express my support for the Urban Trees Program run by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. I am the Urban Canopy Program Manager for The 6th Branch, a community development non-profit organization that works in five underserved communities in East Baltimore, whose mission is to revitalize greenspace projects wanted by communities. The 6th Branch works on 22 acres of greenspace in East Baltimore at the direction of neighborhood leaders to create clean and green spaces that were formerly overgrown vacant lots. The Urban Trees Program over the last couple of years helped fund our Urban Canopy program allowing us to plant 300 new trees in lots across East Baltimore. Not only are 300 new trees being planted but, CBT Urban Trees is allowing us to build out processes for maintaining the newly planted trees, ensuring their survival for many years to come. It is important to not just plant the trees but to ensure their survival so that the neighborhoods fully receive the benefits of the urban canopy. On top of planting trees the program has allowed us to hire local contractors, who are members of the communities where we work

***Veteran Led.  
Community Guided.  
Volunteer Powered.***



It is important that as a small nonprofit we can apply for these funds in the future to further expand our Urban Canopy program. The continuation of the grant will help other nonprofits of all sizes continue to build out their urban canopy programs. This grant allows for nonprofits to continue the work of The Tree Solution Acts and get the state of Maryland closer to its goal of 5 million trees by 2031.

I urge the Board of Public Works and the Department of Budget and Managements to consider this great program. Please let me know if you require any additional information

Sincerely,  
*Colin Lyman*

Colin Lyman  
Urban Canopy Program Manager, The 6th Branch



World Arts Focus  
3309 Bunker Hill Road  
Mount Rainier, MD 20712  
301.699.1819  
[www.joesmovement.org](http://www.joesmovement.org)

**RARE. GRITTY. BRILLIANT.**

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November 25, 2024

**The Honorable Wes Moore**

Governor of Maryland  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**The Honorable Brooke Lierman**

Comptroller of Maryland  
80 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21404

**The Honorable Derrick Davis**

Treasurer of Maryland  
80 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21404

**RE: Support for the Urban Trees Award Program**

Dear Members of the Board of Public Works,

I am writing to share the value of the Urban Tree Program managed by Chesapeake Bay Trust. Our organization is in its third year of planting trees. By this spring, we will have installed nearly 1000 trees across Prince George's County in areas that have heat island effect, poor air quality, and residents without inadequate green space. As an arts organization, we bring a unique skill to the Maryland 5 Million Tree goals: collaboration and communication. We have successfully established production relationships with 8 municipal governments to complement their tree canopy and environmental stewardship goals.

While you will receive many impassioned letters to sustain funding grant programs across Maryland in the coming year, the Urban Tre Program should be maintained above many other grants. Maryland only has one environment, and the climate crisis is urgent. We can't achieve tax revenue, job security, or education if our communities are devastated by natural disasters. Trees protect our communities, and we have planted in areas that have extremely low canopy coverage and scorching heat.

Our organization is achieving goals and leveraging additional resources from federal and foundation grants because of this grant. We established partnerships with four other environmental nonprofits to strategic implement programs for efficiencies and to scale up services, such as invasive vine removal to save mature trees. The educational work is coming into fruition with great attendance to trainings through an empowerment model. This has been important and critical work to build cross-sector environmental program that we want to keep growing! I hope other groups will also be able to have the same opportunity that we did through the Urban Trees Program grant.

Please support continued funding to the Urban Tree Program. It will make sure that we can maintain and plant trees in a shopping center in Bladensburg or around the Burger King in Colmar Manor. I would be happy to share more about our impact or set up a tour to celebrate the value of a tree in underserved communities.

Much appreciation for your leadership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Brooke P. Kidd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brooke" being more prominent than the last name "Kidd".

Brooke Kidd,  
Executive Director

CC:

Secretary Helene Grady, Office of Secretary, Department of Budget & Management  
Manny Welsh, Deputy Chief of Staff & Board of Public Works Executive  
Marc Nicole, Deputy Secretary at Maryland Department of Budget and Management



Angela D. Alsobrooks  
County Executive



Michael D. Johnson, P.E.  
Director

## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Public Works and Transportation Office of Storm Drain Maintenance Division

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11/25/24

The Honorable Wes Moore  
Governor of Maryland  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Brooke Lierman  
Comptroller of Maryland  
80 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21404

The Honorable Derrick Davis  
Treasurer of Maryland  
80 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21404

RE: Support for the Urban Trees Award Program

To the Board of Public Works and the Department of Budget and Management,

Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation has implemented significant projects within our urban and community forestry programs utilizing the Urban Tree Award funding. These programs provide critical benefits to the residents of the county. We have heard that reductions are being considered to the budget for the upcoming year, so we are writing to support the Urban Trees program. This funding has facilitated beneficial environmental and social outcomes in Prince George's County. Over the past 2 years, more than 8000 native trees have been installed in specific urban, underserved communities, as identified by the state. This year, we plan to install



Angela D. Alsobrooks  
County Executive



Michael D. Johnson, P.E.  
Director

## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Public Works and Transportation Office of Storm Drain Maintenance Division

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over 3700 native trees in areas most in need of canopy development utilizing this funding. More than 1500 sites have been selected, marked, and scheduled for installation this planting season. These trees will make a lasting impact on these communities by improving air and water quality, reducing heat exposure, and improving aesthetics for decades. This funding ensures that areas disproportionately affected by environmental challenges benefit directly. The investment is positive and ongoing.

We believe it is crucial to continue applying for these funds to support environmental equity and improvements for these communities. We hope other entities like ours will be able to have the same opportunity to help mitigate environmental and social challenges that tree-planting projects can minimize.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary C. Sherrill".

Mary C. Sherrill  
Chief, Office of Storm Drain Maintenance