



Maryland Department of Agriculture

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BILL NUMBER: HB 72
BILL TITLE: Food Establishments - Lavatory Requirement and On-Farm Food Service Facility License
MDA POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) respectfully submits this letter in support of *House Bill 272 – Lavatory Requirement and On-Farm Food Service Facility License*, a Maryland Department of Health (MDH) departmental bill that establishes an on-farm food service facility license and alters the type of toilet that certain food establishments may use to comply with specific requirements.

The foundational concept of “Agritourism” is centered around inviting the public onto a farm to engage, appreciate, and support Maryland’s agriculture. Agritourism is a value-added activity that is evolving in Maryland, benefiting and educating community members and the next generation of agricultural producers. Members of the public visiting farms to purchase goods and services is not a new concept, however, the expansion of recreational activities and increased flow of visitors is drastically challenging how these value-added agricultural enterprises are viewed through a regulatory lens.

In October 2025, the Maryland Department of Agriculture published a Statewide Guidance and Analysis Document for Value Added Agriculture and Agritourism. This publication, developed in collaboration with sister agencies, identified that the State regulatory code lacks definitions for agricultural events and activities, and value-added farm enterprises often get presented with costly upgrades that contradict the viability of the business concept. Lacking definitions and guidelines for seasonal operations at the State level introduce cost prohibitive regulations associated with permanent restroom and food service facilities, which presents scalability as an existing challenge for Agritourism opportunities in Maryland. One of the identified opportunities in the Statewide Guidance and Analysis Document for Value Added Agriculture and Agritourism for improving the regulatory framework for value-added agricultural enterprises was the consideration of alternative licensing for Agritourism activities.

HB 272 provides a farm-specific licensing opportunity more conducive to the unique nature and seasonality of agricultural enterprises expanding into agritourism activities. This license could provide Maryland's farm operations with an approachable entry into agritourism and industry expansion. This bill addresses the unique needs and infrastructure of Maryland's agritourism enterprises, while accounting for and ensuring public health and safety is addressed. For these reasons, MDA strongly supports HB 272 and respectfully requests a favorable report.

MDA appreciates the consideration of the above information in the Committee's deliberations.

If you have additional questions, please contact Harrison Palmer, MDA Chief of Staff at Harrisonb.palmer@maryland.gov or (410) 980-9887.