



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 5, 2020

To: House Appropriations Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 1098 - Use of Public Funds - Playground and Athletic Field Surfaces - Authorizations, Preferences, and Prohibitions (Safe and Healthy Fields Act)**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 1098, legislation that encourages all school sports fields to return to the use of real grass, rather than artificial turf. State funds would no longer be used to create playgrounds or athletic fields with synthetic surfaces.

Currently, state funds can be used for the construction of fields made from either synthetic or natural materials. This bill would only permit the use of funds for real turf fields. Funding would also be provided for the maintenance of the grass fields, as well as the drainage systems that would be required.

Based the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there are 4,792 acres of turf grass grown in Maryland, an increase of more than 300 acres from the 2012 census. The value of turf grass sales from Maryland farms is more than \$23 million per year. Having an opportunity to increase the demand for natural grass turf is not only better for the environment but also increases the economic opportunities for farmers in Maryland.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 1098 AND ENCOURAGE A FAVORABLE REPORT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396