

Testimony before the Maryland Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Senate Bill: Senate Bill 351 “Farmers Market Integrity Act”

Committee: Sen. Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair

Position: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Date: February 11, 2020

Janet Terry, Olney Farmers and Artists Market President

My name is Janet Terry. I’m president and founder of the Olney Farmers and Artists Market. I’m here to express my support for Senate Bill 351, but with a very important amendment.

The Olney Market is in its 13th season and has become an integral part of the Olney community. We started out with just a handful of producer-only farmers, a few healthy food vendors and juried artists. Now, we are a 501-C-3, with about 18 farmers, food vendors and amazingly talented artisans. We draw thousands of customers on Sundays, year-round. We are strictly a producer-only Market. That means we inspect every farm, to ensure that every farmer is growing what they sell at the Olney Market.

Our mission is to bring fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables and a wide variety of primarily healthy, food items to the Olney community. We have become the central gathering place for families to spend quality time together on Sundays. Customers spend hours at the Market, buying locally grown produce; listening to live, local bands, and exercising in our Be Fit tent. Children do all kinds of farmers market-related crafts in our Kids Tent. The Market also offers one of the premiere venues for artisans in the area. All crafts must be handmade by the artist and juried. For some vendors, this is a chance to start a second career, after retirement. A few years ago, we gave a free booth to a group of autistic children, so they could sell their handmade crafts.

We support the bill, since it provides stringent requirements to meet the definition of a farmers market. We agree with you that the definition should NOT include flea markets. At the same time, we want to make absolutely certain that the bill doesn't preclude a creative market, such as ours. We propose adding the following language to page 3, Line C, to clarify the definition.

“Farmers Market” means a building, structure or place used by two or more people for the direct sale of farm and food products to consumers. **This does NOT preclude a venue where local farmers, producers, and artisans come together to offer a variety of fresh, local produce, prepared food and locally crafted products, directly to the consumer.**

We applaud the committee's work and thank you for your time.

Janet Terry