



February 10, 2020

RE: **SB 351 - Farmer's Market Integrity Act**
Position - Unfavorable

To the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

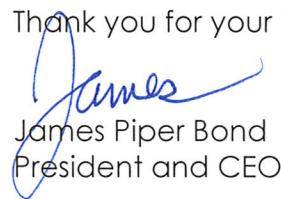
This letter is submitted on behalf of Baltimore-based nonprofit organization, Living Classrooms Foundation. For 35 years, Living Classrooms has been dedicated to serving the needs of our community, in an effort to disrupt the cycle of poverty, with effective, innovative hands-on education, workforce development, and health and wellness/violence prevention programming. The support of both public and private sectors are critical to the Foundation's ability to provide services to over 25,000 children, youth, and adults annually.

The proposed Farmer's Market Integrity Act will negatively impact Sprouts Farmer's Market grocery store's ability to operate in Maryland.

Prior to opening its first stores in Maryland, "Sprout's Farmers Market" connected with Living Classrooms and other community-based organizations to learn how they could best support the community. The approach they took was to truly listen to and understand the needs of our community. Since they opened in Maryland, they have supported Living Classrooms with critical funding to support our national model/award-winning after school program, "BUGS," which stands for **B**altimore **U**rban **G**ardening with **S**tudents Program. The BUGS Program works with economically disadvantaged students, many of whom live within a food desert. Funding from Sprouts provides health and nutrition education, which incorporates horticulture and cooking. Students not only learn about nutrition and how to cook healthy meals, they in turn share those meals and skills with their families. Sprouts also provides employees to provide much-needed volunteer services within our community.

We support the stores, services, and investment into our community that Sprouts has brought, and are very grateful for Sprout's much needed support of our BUGS program.

Thank you for your important consideration,



James Piper Bond
President and CEO