

MARYLAND WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

SB986

Public Schools – Agricultural Education and Grant Programs

Position: FAVORABLE

Mr. Chair Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee:

My name is Brig Dumais and I am the Executive Director of the Maryland Workforce Alliance, a statewide, multi-industry coalition of 36 trade associations, labor unions, and apprenticeship providers united to build a world-class workforce in Maryland through common sense workforce development legislation. The Alliance works for the creation of jobs in markets experiencing labor shortages by advocating for robust Career and Technical Education (CTE) in public schools, certificate programs in community colleges, and youth & registered apprenticeship programs.

We encourage a favorable report on SB986, establishing the Maryland Agricultural Education Grant Program and requiring county boards of education to implement robust agricultural education programs. There are currently only 65 students participating in registered youth apprenticeship programs in Maryland, and we need to significantly increase that number. SB986 will help achieve that goal. The more sectors that offer workforce training to high school students, the more career paths young people will be able to pursue in high-wage, high-growth sectors. Agriculture is an especially important industry to support with grant programs that expand apprenticeship programs because modern agriculture involves so many different industries, providing educational opportunities tailored to the specific interests of each student.

We thank the Committee for your time and consideration, and we request you issue a favorable report on SB986.

Respectfully,

Brigette Dumais
Executive Director
MD Workforce Alliance
443-985-8833, brigette.dumais.mwa@gmail.com
mdworkforcealliance.com