

To: Anne R. Kaiser, Chair Maryland Ways and Means Committee

Date: March 3, 2020

House Bill 1362 Harford County – Transfer Tax – Distribution of Proceeds

As a Harford County citizen whose family has roots in the North Harford farming community dating back to 1918, I am **OPPOSED** to HB 1362. My husband's grandfather brought his family to Maryland to farm and have a better life than the one they left in Southwest Virginia. The farm is now owned by a cousin and has been preserved via the Harford County agricultural land preservation program. It is actively being farmed today.

The Harford County Transfer Tax was approved by Harford County citizens in 1992 overwhelmingly 69% to 31%. I was one of those citizens. Protecting farmland is important to Harford County, we can't make more farmland! Changing the usage formula for the Transfer Tax will irreversibly damage and destroy the agricultural preservation program in Harford County. Growing houses instead of food and fiber certainly costs taxpayers more with added capital expenditures.

Harford County farmers have been able to utilize the payments they receive for preserving their farms to grow their businesses. Many Harford County farmers have created businesses that provide agritainment or agritourism destinations promoting tourism in the County. From pick your own orchards, hay rides, petting zoos, children's discovery farms, farmers markets, farm restaurants, creameries that offer locally made ice cream and cheeses, farm to table events, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, fall festivals and local home breweries many living in Harford County have the opportunity to learn and benefit from preserved farms.

Protecting Harford County's rural heritage is important to its citizens. I urge the Committee to give an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 1362.

Patti Hankins
229 St. Mary's Road
Pylesville, MD 21132
Patti.hankins@gmail.com