



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

March 2, 2021

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Opposition of HB1199 - Workers' Compensation – Occupational Disease Presumptions – COVID-19**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony opposing HB 1199. This bill would allow employees that are considered essential workers who are suffering from the effects of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 are presumed to have an occupational disease that was suffered in the line of duty or course of employment to be compensated through workman's comp. This bill would require an individual who is eligible for these benefits to provide a copy of the positive test or the written documentation confirming the diagnosis to the employer or insurer.

The primary focus of the bill is on first responders and health care workers. However, it also includes businesses that were included as essential during the COVID Pandemic. This would include agriculture. In most cases, the farm worker is not exposed to the public and would have a significantly less risk of contracting the virus at work. However, this bill would allow that worker to claim workman's comp by showing a positive test result. This would be devastating to farm operations.

We would support this **exemption language** that is currently included in the paid sick leave law: "Employee" does not include an individual who is employed in the agricultural sector on an agricultural operation under § 5-403(a) of the Courts Article.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU RESPECTFULLY OPPOSES HB 1199

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

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