



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

January 14, 2021

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: Support of HB 8 - Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Use of Proceeds for Maryland Healthy Soils Program

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 8, legislation that would add the Maryland Healthy Soils Program to what is considered climate change and resiliency programs within the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund. In addition, this bill would dedicate \$500,000 of the fund to be used for the Maryland Healthy Soils Program to help meet the air quality goals outlined in the statute and in Maryland's 40 by 30 Regional Greenhouse Gas goals.

Carbon sequestration from production agriculture has proven to greatly reduce the greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. Healthy soils practices like cover crops, no-till farming, rotational grazing and conservation tillage greatly increase the removal of greenhouse gasses. Increasing these practices in Maryland will help lessen climate volatility in the region. Healthy soils programs are a key part of Maryland's regional greenhouse gas reduction goals. Data collected that compares Maryland's current healthy soils practices to the State's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) finds that over the last 10 years, Maryland's healthy soils practices have reduced the amount of GHG by 6.14 mmt compared to 3.6 mmt for RGGI over the same timeframe.

Asking farmers to do more with less, and with no assistance, makes it very difficult for farmers to afford to participate. This bill addresses the funding deficiencies needed to create a robust program that will help all of Maryland. This bill passed in this format both the committee and the House Chamber with a unanimous vote during the 2020 legislative session, but ran out of time in the Senate due to the early close of the session due to COVID-19.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 8 AND ENCOURAGES A FAVORABLE REPORT.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

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