



50 Harry S. Truman Parkway • Annapolis, MD 21401  
Office: 410-841-5772 • Fax: 410-841-5987 • TTY: 800-735-2258  
Email: [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov)  
Website: [www.rural.maryland.gov](http://www.rural.maryland.gov)  
*Charlotte Davis, Executive Director*

*John Hartline, Chair*

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Dereck E. Davis  
House Office Building, Room 231  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Dereck E. Davis

The Rural Maryland Council **Supports** House Bill 841 - Labor and Employment - Maryland Wage and Hour Law - Agricultural Stands, Retail Farms, and Farmers' Markets. The bill exempts from the Maryland Wage and Hour Law an individual employed at an agricultural stand, a retail farm, or a farmers' market that primarily sells agricultural products that the employer has produced.

This bill is to clarify that the minimum wage does not apply to those working at a retail farm, agricultural stand or a farmers' market that primarily sells agricultural products that the employer has produced. Many of these workers are young and with little or no job experience. Having the chance to work at an agricultural stand, retail farm, or farmers market will allow them to gain experience and knowledge of the industry, while allowing them to make some money while doing so. Increasing the wage will possibly result in these young people not being hired and missing out on a learning opportunity.

Labor is the already the second most expensive aspect of farming operations. The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service's *2012 Agricultural Census* reports that 10% of the U.S agriculture's total operating expenses was for hired and contractual labor. This is much higher in areas such as fruit and tree nut farming which accounts for 39%, or vegetable and melon farming that accounts for 27%. The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service's *2015 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey* reported that \$3 Billion in sales came from almost 115,000 farms doing direct-to consumer sales, including \$2 Billion coming from on-farm stores and farmers markets.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully asks for a favorable report on House Bill 841.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Davis  
Executive Director  
Rural Maryland Council