



February 16, 2021

Senator Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
2 East, Miller Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Kelley,

On behalf of the seven-hundred members, including many agricultural businesses, the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 502- Labor and Employment-Maryland Wage and Hour Law-Agricultural Stands.

Senate Bill 502 would establish an exemption from the Maryland Wage and Hour Law (minimum wage) for an individual employed at an agricultural farm stand that sells perishable or seasonable produce that the employer has produced on his/her farm. This provision was inadvertently left out of the minimum wage legislation of 2018. There are more than 1,400 family farm stands in Maryland which are primarily seasonal in nature. These small businesses largely employ young individuals in their first ever job, almost all high school or college students for this seasonal work.

Due to the volatile business that farming is, weather dependent, commodity pricing on a national scale and market competition from commercial produce markets (grocers), these farm stands can mean the difference between a family farm staying solvent year over year. Being required to comply with the mandated minimum wage at its current and future levels, places these family owned and operated stands in an uncompetitive disadvantage relative to commercial grocers.

Small businesses and agricultural businesses in Maryland are driving forces for job creation and economic vitality statewide. We urge a Favorable Report on SB 502.

Sincerely,

William R. Chambers
President/CEO
Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce

SALISBURY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Voice for Business on Delmarva