



POSITION STATEMENT
**HB639/SB51 - Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland –
Property Management – Southern Maryland Regional Agricultural Center**
February 23, 2021

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), a division of the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland (TCCSMD) is asking for full support for HB639/SB51 - Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland – Property Management – Southern Maryland Regional Agricultural Center, entered by Senator Bailey and Delegate Davis. The Bill requests a minor change in the TCCSMD General Provisions that would allow SMADC, as their agricultural division, the ability to act as Property Managers for the Southern Maryland Regional Agricultural Center (RAC) that is being built in cooperation with St. Mary’s County, and that will serve all five Southern Maryland counties and their agricultural producers.

The proposed change newly defines the term of “Property Management” to be the “entity responsible for the management and maintenance of real property, including, but not limited to, finding tenants, collecting rent, paying expenses and applicable taxes, maintaining utilities and systems, and otherwise doing what is necessary to manage and operate real property.” The Bill also narrowly defines the scope of this work as being at “the Southern Maryland Regional Agricultural Center, which is owned and located within St. Mary’s County.” The reason for the change is that current TCC legislation places restrictions on the services that SMADC can offer at the RAC. A fully functional RAC capable of adding value to Southern Maryland agricultural and livestock products, aggregate and distribute those products, and provide instructional and regulatory-advice services has long been needed and a goal of Southern Maryland farmers. Considering the wealth of knowledge that SMADC brings to this project, it has always been the intention that St. Mary’s County will own the RAC and SMADC will provide the expertise and personnel to run and manage the RAC for the benefit of the Region. To that end, SMADC must secure this amendment to the TCC General Provisions in order to be able to provide these services.

The following services will be offered at the RAC with SMADC’s management:

A Regional Butcher Shop/Cut and Wrap Facility, a Finer Meats Processing Facility, creation of a Southern Maryland Meats Charcuterie Brand, Apprenticeship Programs and Job Training, a Meat Locker and Cold Storage Facility, a Warehouse and Distribution Site, a Commercial Kitchen, an Instructional Kitchen Classroom, and a product Storage Facility. It is forecast that the RAC will supply full-time employment for 17 Southern Maryland residents.

A fully operational RAC, with SMADC’s expertise as programs and property manager, is vital to the continued growth of the agricultural economy in Southern Maryland. We ask that you solidly support this Bill for Southern Maryland agriculture.

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