



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

February 2, 2021

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Opposition of HB577 - Health and Welfare of H-2 Visa and Migrant Workers – COVID-19 Pandemic – Regulations (Healthy Farmworkers Act)**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony opposing HB 577. This bill would require the Secretary of Labor to adopt regulations, on or before October 1, 2021, relating to housing, accommodations, safety, health, rights, and welfare of H-2A and H-2B visa and migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This bill would put in state law requirements over and above the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the US Department of Labor. These restrictions would be almost impossible for a farm to adhere to and would most likely put them out of business due to the not being allowed H-2A seasonal workers. In addition, MD Department of Labor does not have the manpower to inspect these operations in time to meet the limited timelines farmers have to apply for and receive H-2A visa workers. H-2A housing is already inspected annually.

The farm worker housing requirements to meet COVID pandemic have already been created by CDC and are being adhered to by farmers in Maryland. This legislation is a solution looking for a problem and is not needed.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU RESPECTFULLY OPPOSES HB 577

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