



## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FARM BUREAU, INC.

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**To:** House Appropriations Committee

**From:** Prince George's County Farm Bureau, Inc.

**Re:** House Bill 540 - University of Maryland Extension - Urban Farmer Assistance

**Date:** February 22, 2022

On behalf of the Prince George's County Farm Bureau, I would like to express our backing of House Bill 540, which supports urban farmers through extension agents dedicated to urban agricultural production as well as urban agribusiness management.

Urban Agriculture in Prince George's County provides residents access to locally produced healthy foods in areas that historically have been undeserved. As the Urban Agriculture community is rapidly expanding, it is imperative that they are provided the resources needed to continue to contribute to Healthy Food Priority Areas and successfully continue to contribute to food priority areas and local food production networks.

University of Maryland Extension provides an invaluable tool to farmers by performing, publishing and sharing research, and consulting producers on several crop production and agribusiness topics. Urban agricultural producers deserve equal access to these resources with urban agriculturally focused experts/agents, research, and publications.

For urban agricultural enterprises to maximize the quantity and quality of food needed to support local markets, research and education on best management practices are essential. A dedicated extension agent also provides a direct contact for these producers who are in both the beginning and developed stages of production. This opportunity also encourages the crossover between beginning farmer training programs through other agencies that grows the support network for these invaluable members of the agricultural community.

An expert in the urban agribusiness management side of the operation provides the skills and resources to successfully manage these operations for long term production and sustainable economic practices. As a farmer, it is critical to have skills and knowledge in business on top of your ability to effectively produce your crop. Since urban agribusiness is such a unique and complex market, this extension agent can provide the framework for producers to operate within existing legal structure and generate a profit to sustain the business.

The Prince George's County Farm Bureau fully supports HB540 and looks forward to working with the University of Maryland Extension service to support urban farmers and the communities they serve.

Sincerely,

Harrison B. Palmer  
Young Farmer Chair  
Prince George's County Farm Bureau