



February 22, 2022

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee

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

Position: *Support*

Chairwoman McIntosh & Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts to express our support for House Bill 540 – Agriculture - University of Maryland Extension - Urban Farmer Assistance. This bill would require the University of Maryland Extension to hire an extension agent that would be solely dedicated to urban farming operations and agribusinesses.

Agricultural operations continue to expand within our urban landscapes in Maryland, doing everything from beekeeping to growing vegetables and flowers. Farming techniques such as vertical farming and hoop houses have been implemented to help contribute to a sustainable food network. These farmers have worked well within the urban environment, but at times face unique issues such as soil quality, water management on non-agricultural parcels, neighbor relations, and much more. By providing these resilient farmers with additional resources and financial assistance we can help promote and grow urban agriculture within our high-density landscapes.

I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 540, which shows your dedicated support to the agricultural community. Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Nelson, Executive Director
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts