

February 7, 2022

To: Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Maryland State Senate
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

From: Daniel A. Donohue
16401 Old Marshall Hall Road
Accokeek, Maryland 20607

Re: Support of SB0378 – Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Funding for Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission

I am a native Marylander and veteran. I live on the farm I grew up on and presently raise beef cattle and hay. This property is in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Trust and is a Certified Tree Farm. I am one of the Prince George's County members of the Board of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). In addition I am on the Prince George's County Forestry Board, the Alice Ferguson Foundation Board, an environmental education and agricultural foundation in Accokeek, and the Resilience Authority of Charles County. Our farm is in Prince George's and Charles counties.

I am writing to you in strong support for SB0378 Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Funding for SMADC. The bill is asking for an annual budget of \$900,000 from the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF) to be funded to the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland for their SMADC department (TCCSMD/SMADC). The CRF fund is part of the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) that comes into the state every year in perpetuity. SMADC currently receives \$900,000 from that fund, however it is due to sunset soon; this bill would ensure that SMADC continues to receive funding from the continual non-lapsing CRF fund.

For many years now, SMADC has utilized the CRF fund to help farmers transition out of tobacco production and into other sectors of agriculture. SMADC has a proven track record in providing valuable assistance, programs, and grant funds to the farming community, as well as being a valued partner to other agricultural industry organizations such as the Maryland Farm Bureau, MARBIDCO, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, and others.

Funding SMADC is crucial because:

- SMADC serves 2,011 farms on 205,000 acres in the five county Southern Maryland area; Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties, and maintains several statewide agricultural programs now as well.
- In FY22, with only \$900,000 in operating funds provided by the State to run the organization, SMADC proceeded to bring an additional \$1.3 million dollars into Maryland via non-state funding for programs and grants supporting the Maryland farming and small business community. SMADC is a good investment for the state.

- SMADC is currently in the process of building a \$4.7 million dollar Regional Agricultural Center (RAC) that will transform the agricultural business economy in Southern Maryland and beyond.

- SMADC's Maryland Market Money Program serves 550 local producers and 46 farmers markets statewide, providing over \$449,000 worth of fresh food to low income families.

Respectfully ask that SB0378 be strongly endorsed by the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee to insure that SMADC continues to support the agricultural economic interests of not only Southern Maryland but the entire state. My personal experience is in attending their informational meetings on the planning for the Regional Agricultural Center that will enhance agricultural income in the Southern Maryland region once it is completed. I found these meeting very informative and helpful. In addition through SMADC's Southern Maryland Meats program they have sponsored frozen meat trailers that producers can rent for a nominal fee in order to move their processed meat from a slaughterhouse back to local markets and customers. I have used the frozen meat trailer and it is very useful when I have been moving frozen USDA processed beef, usually from 5 -6 head of cattle, approximately 2,500 to 3,000 pounds back to my customer. Also, the Southern Maryland Meats representative assisted me in finding a commercial buyer to purchase the USDA inspected beef I produce. SMADC is vital to the agricultural interests and its support for agricultural conservation practices is vital.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Daniel A. Donohue