



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

March 9, 2022

To: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of SB 437 - Agriculture - University of Maryland Extension - Urban Farmer Assistance**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 437. This bill requires the University of Maryland Extension to hire an extension agent dedicated to urban farm production methods and crop management and an extension agent dedicated to urban farm and agribusiness management. It requires the agents to perform applied research and provide education to urban farmers. Finally, the bill requires the Governor to annually include \$300,000 in the annual budget bill for the extension agents hired under the Act.

Technical assistance and education are needed in the urban agricultural sector as many new and beginning farmers don't understand the Food Safety Modernization Act requirements, the state's nutrient management plan requirements or the state, county and local health department standards. Increasing the number of extension staff dedicated to urban agriculture will assist with these education needs.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

- We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget for funding the University of Maryland Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable funding support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the University.
- We support ongoing skills' development training in urban agriculture for all ages.
- We support the expansion of urban farming and the creation of a clear pathway to land ownership for urban farmers.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 437 AND REQUEST A FAVORABLE REPORT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson".

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396