

Support of HB 75- Maryland Agricultural Commission

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

March 22, 2022

To: Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 75 - Maryland Agricultural Commission – Hemp Industry Member**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 75, legislation that would increase the number of members on the Maryland Agricultural Commission by adding a member to represent one of the fastest growing agricultural enterprises in Maryland – the Hemp Industry.

The Maryland Agricultural Commission is appointed by the Governor and serves as an advisory body to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. Members on the Commission are tasked to formulate and make proposals for the advancement of Maryland agriculture.

This is very timely legislation because the federal Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, or better known as the 2018 Farm Bill, altered certain federal authority relating to the production and marketing of hemp and removes hemp from the federal Controlled Substances Act. This caused a huge increase in the number of farmers interested in growing hemp in Maryland.

The ability to grow hemp does not come without its challenges however, and as such it would be beneficial to have a voice on the Maryland Agricultural Commission to represent that industry.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

- We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow hemp as an agricultural crop.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 75 AND REQUEST A FAVORABLE REPORT

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

HB75 Senate Sponsor Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: David Fraser-Hidalgo

Position: FAV

DAVID FRASER-HIDALGO
Legislative District 15
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Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair

Motor Vehicle and Transportation
Subcommittee

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB75
Maryland Agricultural Commission – Hemp Industry Member
Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo Sponsor Testimony
March 22, 2022- The Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee

I am happy to report that the efforts of the Maryland General Assembly to bring back hemp as an agricultural option for Maryland farmers are finally reaping the benefits. Farmers are now growing hemp and working through the early phases that most “start-ups” experience.

At last count, Maryland has 98 registered farmers using their resources to grow approximately 1,200 acres of a valuable crop previously unavailable to them. I am particularly passionate about the industry’s potential impact on our local economy. With our ideal climate, close proximity to major markets, and transportation assets, hemp could quickly become a cash crop with major benefits to our state. Hemp can be utilized to help revitalize agricultural communities and create jobs. We need to support this industry as it gets its footing. Hemp is practically a new commodity for Maryland, and farmers need the support of the Department of Agriculture to succeed.

HB75 takes a positive step forward in supporting this new industry by creating a new member on the Maryland Agricultural Commission designated to represent the hemp industry. The Commission is appointed by the Governor and serves as an advisory body to the secretary and deputy secretary of Agriculture. The commission currently consists of 30 members representing various commodities across Maryland. A designated seat for the hemp industry will allow the Commission to achieve a better understanding of the unique challenges facing hemp farmers and create an environment where our farmers can thrive while also providing direct benefits to Maryland. I ask you for a favorable report for HB75 to develop Maryland into a leader in the hemp market.

HB75-Senate-SUPPORT-HempCoalition.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Atticks

Position: FAV



MARYLAND HEMP
COALITION

SUPPORT HB75

March 22, 2022

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice-Chair and Committee Members—

On behalf of the Maryland Hemp Coalition, I write to urge support for HB75, which adds to the Maryland Agriculture Commission a seat designated to represent hemp.

The Maryland Agriculture Commission meets monthly, and advises the Maryland Department of Agriculture of issues within the various sectors of Maryland's agricultural industry. By creating a seat for hemp, the industry has a voice alongside the many other important sectors within the industry.

The Maryland Hemp Coalition formed in 2019, and represents growers, processors and sellers of hemp. The industry is only in its third year, with 80+ growers and related businesses located throughout Maryland.

We urge your support of this legislation's very limited request to add a seat to the Maryland Agriculture Commission designated for the hemp industry.

Sincerely,

Kevin Atticks
Founder & CEO



3.22.22 - MDA - HB 75 - Letter of Info.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Cassie Shirk

Position: INFO



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary
Julianne A. Oberg, Deputy Secretary

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Maryland Department of Agriculture

Legislative Comment

Date: March 22, 2022

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 75

SHORT TITLE: Maryland Agricultural Commission – Hemp Industry Member

MDA POSITION: Information

EXPLANATION:

House Bill 75 would increase the membership of the Maryland Agriculture Commission from 30 to 31 members and require the additional member be appointed from the hemp industry.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Maryland Agriculture Commission is appointed by the Governor, and serves as an advisory body to the secretary and deputy secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA).

The commission pursues the following priorities and activities:

- Encouraging the agricultural community to be more proactive on issues affecting agriculture and rural life;
- Evaluating farm/agriculture industry labor and regulations;
- Increasing public awareness of food safety; and
- Supporting the department's efforts to promote agriculture.

Recognizing that industrial hemp is an emerging industry, last year, MDA filled the vacant “At-Large Ag Services” seat on the Maryland Agriculture Commission with a representative from the hemp industry.

If you have additional questions, please contact Cassie Shirk, Director of Legislation and Governmental Affairs, at cassie.shirk@maryland.gov or 410-841-5886.