



March 9, 2022

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chairman  
Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

**Re: Senate Bill 601 – Baltimore City Soil Conservation District - Establishment – Requirements**

Position: **Informational**

Chairman Pinsky & Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) I am providing information regarding the establishment of a Baltimore City Soil Conservation District. MASCD, incorporated in 1956, promotes practical and effective soil, water, and natural resource related programs to all Marylanders. Through individual conservation districts MASCD provides leadership, education, cooperation, and local direction, on a voluntary basis, promoting these initiatives.

Agricultural operations are expanding within our urban landscapes in Maryland, doing everything from beekeeping to growing vegetables and flowers. Farming techniques such as vertical farming and hoop houses are implemented to contribute to a sustainable food network. These farmers work 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. Our organization believes Senate Bill 601 begins the necessary conversation in establishing a conservation district that will provide the technical and financial resources needed to navigate these issues.

MASCD contains thousands of success stories ranging from innovative conservation techniques to waterway management. Conservation districts are locally led to address soil and water issues at the district level while also connecting their farmers and residents to resources at the state and federal level. Our shared success is the result of a network of partners established through a fair and just process in which the agricultural communities throughout the State are appointed and serve the common goal of their communities. A unified future for agriculture in the State of Maryland is proved to be effective when we can work together.

Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Nelson, Executive Director  
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts