



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

March 30, 2022

To: Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 1216 - Department of Agriculture - Urban Agriculture Grant Fund**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 1216, legislation that would establish the Statewide Urban Agriculture Grant Program in the Department of Agriculture to increase the viability of urban farming and improve access to urban-grown foods. The Fund would be a non-lapsing fund held by the State Treasurer that could also receive monies from the any other source including the Federal Government. Through nonprofits, the program would focus on technical assistance, securing real property and grants for capital improvements for urban farmers. As amended, the bill requires \$250,000 per year for 4 years starting in FY24.

MDFB Policy: We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture.

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.

We support grant programs to provide infrastructure for urban farms.

We support the use of Program Open Space funds to purchase easements on vacant lots and green spaces within planned urban developments and city limits to be used for urban agriculture.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 1216 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