



March 08, 2021  
The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
91 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1904

**SB 437- Agriculture - University of Maryland Extension - Urban Farmer Assistance**  
Senator Cory McCray

Position: Favorable

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

The Fair Farms Campaign asks for a favorable report of this bill. Fair Farms is a program of Waterkeepers Chesapeake which works with local farmers that grow sustainably to create policies that would benefit them. We are a campaign with over 150 partners, including farmers, urban and rural, advocates, and business owners.

Historically, U.S. institutions viewed urban agriculture as a hobby—it is not. The COVID-19 Pandemic made it clear that urban farms proved to be more resilient and helped to feed communities healthy food<sup>1</sup>. It is a viable business and food production model that can provide jobs and financial support in the local economy<sup>2</sup>.

This bill is part of the solution to support urban agriculture at the institutional level. The University of Maryland Extension already provides excellent educational and research support to farmers across the state. Urban farmers should have access to the same resources as their rural counterparts. Without the proper education and research support, urban agriculture will not progress. Maryland has been an innovator in the agricultural sector for many years. Funding two new positions at UMD Extension will galvanize innovations in this field and support urban farming businesses.

We respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB 437. Thank you to Senator McCray, his office, and the other stakeholders who drafted this legislation. We hope to work with the Senator on issues related to agriculture and food equity in the future.

Sincerely,

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Campaign Manager, Fair Farms  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake



1 Schoen V, Blythe C, Caputo S, Fox-Kämper R, Specht K, Fargue-Lelièvre A, Cohen N, Ponizy Land Feden' czak K (2021) "We Have Been Part of the Response": The Effects of COVID-19 on Community and Allotment Gardens in the Global North. *Front. Sustain. Food Syst.* 5:732641.doi: 10.3389/fsufs.2021.732641

2 A Tool for Creating Economic Development and Healthy Communities in Prince George's County, MD, *The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission*.