



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 601- Baltimore City Soil Conservation District - Establishment - Requirements
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, both urban and rural, advocates, and business owners.

In Maryland, the city of Baltimore is the hub of urban agricultural innovation. Fair Farms works with urban farms and community organizations in the city such as BLISS Meadows, Hillen Homestead, and the Baltimore Farm Alliance. Others include Plantation Park Heights and the Black Yield Institute.

Soil Conservation Districts play a vital role in supporting farms. They work collaboratively with farmers to meet their needs and provide services that mitigate climate change such as nutrient and stormwater management.

Every county in Maryland has a soil conservation district except Baltimore City, which is independent of other counties. If we want to create an equitable food system that supports all types of farming, then Baltimore City needs one as well.

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,

Humon Heidarian
humon@fairfarmsnow.org
Campaign Manager, Fair Farms
Waterkeepers Chesapeake

