



February 25, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chairman  
House Environment and Transportation Committee

**Re: House Bill 855 – Agriculture – Urban Agriculture Water and Power Infrastructure Grant Program and Fund – Establishment**

Position: *Support*

Chairman Barve & Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts to express our support for House Bill 855 – Agriculture – Urban Agriculture Water and Power Infrastructure Grant Program and Fund – Establishment. This bill would increase the feasibility of urban farming and community gardens and improve access to urban-grown foods by providing critical funding to urban agricultural producers and qualified nonprofit organizations for the purchase and installation of agricultural equipment.

Agricultural operations continue to expand within our urban landscapes in Maryland, doing everything from beekeeping to growing vegetables and flowers. Farming techniques such as vertical farming and hoop houses have been implemented to help contribute to a sustainable food network. These farmers have worked 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. By providing these resilient farmers with additional resources and financial assistance we can help promote and grow urban agriculture within our high-density landscapes.

I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 855, which shows your dedicated support to the agricultural community. Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Nelson, Executive Director  
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts