



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

January 19, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 156 - Local Governments – Urban Agricultural Incentive Zones – Authorization**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 156, legislation that authorizes a local government to establish, by local law, procedures for a qualifying farmer or partner organization to apply to the local government to designate an area as an urban agricultural incentive zone. It requires a local government to establish an urban agricultural incentive zone advisory committee to advise the local government on the designation of an area as an urban agricultural incentive zone. Finally, it requires the Comptroller to distribute the sales and use tax revenue on the sale of farm products in an urban agricultural incentive zone to the local government in which the urban agricultural incentive zone is located.

The bill allows municipalities to offer certain incentives (reduced water/electricity prices, tax reductions, etc) and would enable Maryland to take advantage of existing USDA grants.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

- We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture.
- We support modifying zoning laws to promote urban agriculture and the right to farm within urban areas and city limits.
- 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.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 156 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