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Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair
Motor Vehicle and Transportation
Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB75
Maryland Agricultural Commission – Hemp Industry Member
Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo Sponsor Testimony
January 13, 2022- The Environment and Transportation Committee

I am happy to report that the efforts of the Maryland General Assembly to bring back hemp as an agricultural option for Maryland farmers are finally reaping the benefits. Farmers are now growing hemp and working through the early phases that most “start-ups” experience.

At last count, Maryland has 98 registered farmers using their resources to grow approximately 1,200 acres of a valuable crop previously unavailable to them. I am particularly passionate about the industry’s potential impact on our local economy. With our ideal climate, close proximity to major markets, and transportation assets, hemp could quickly become a cash crop with major benefits to our state. Hemp can be utilized to help revitalize agricultural communities and create jobs. We need to support this industry as it gets its footing. Hemp is practically a new commodity for Maryland, and farmers need the support of the Department of Agriculture to succeed.

HB75 takes a positive step forward in supporting this new industry by creating a new member on the Maryland Agricultural Commission designated to represent the hemp industry. The Commission is appointed by the Governor and serves as an advisory body to the secretary and deputy secretary of Agriculture. The commission currently consists of 30 members representing various commodities across Maryland. A designated seat for the hemp industry will allow the Commission to achieve a better understanding of the unique challenges facing hemp farmers and create an environment where our farmers can thrive while also

providing direct benefits to Maryland. I ask you for a favorable report for HB75 to develop Maryland into a leader in the hemp market.