



January 19, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chairman
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: House Bill 156 - Local Governments – Urban Agricultural Incentive Zones – Authorization

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 156, Local Governments – Urban Agricultural Incentive Zones – Authorization. This bill authorizes local governments to establish an urban agricultural zone which provides financial incentives to qualifying producers of urban agricultural operations.

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, stormwater management on non-agricultural parcels, neighbors, 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 156, which shows your dedicated support to the entire 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