Senate Judiciary Committee and Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
SB783 – Constitutional Amendment – Environmental Human Rights Amendment
Hearing: March 9, 2022
Favorable

-Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chair, Honorable Members of the Committee-

-My name is Cleo Braver. My husband and I own and farm Cottingham Farm in Talbot County. We grow vegetables, herbs and pastured meats which we sell at our farm store, at farmers' markets, restaurants, and through a food service organization to institutions.

-We are very much in support of this constitutional amendment, the recognition of the right of all Marylanders to a healthy environment, and the emerging recognition and promotion of regenerative agriculture and the role it can play.

-The MD farming community often expresses the importance of its stewardship of the land and the Chesapeake Bay. It gives the agricultural community pride to say that our goal is to farm in a way that is protective of the resources that belong to the landowner, the farmer and to all of us.

-Because this is the case, the farming community should have no objection to a constitutional amendment which recognizes our collective interest – and really only asks that citizens be permitted a voice in the matter.

-Maryland's food producers know that healthy people require healthy plants and animals and that those I turn require healthy soils. That we now know that carbon can be stored in healthy soils and reverse climate change magnifies the importance of getting this right and recognizing truly regenerative practices, both in farming and in other areas.

-We have an inherent obligation to protect our soil from physical, biological and chemical disturbances, to be more bio-diverse, to protect our waterways from chemicals, synthetics and sediment runoff, to protect our climate from irreversible change, to protect our earth and each other.

-Natural resource scarcity is in our future unless we as farmers and you as legislators move us in the right direction. Stating our intentions is a good start.