

February 26, 2024

SB745

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Dear Committee Members,

I write to you asking for a favorable report on SB745 (HB1494).

During my 40 plus years raising livestock and horses in Baltimore and Harford Counties, I have witnessed firsthand the drastic decline in available veterinarians for on farm livestock visits. When I was very young and starting my 4-H livestock projects, the same vet that we took our family dogs to would also do farm visits and was available for livestock emergencies 7 days a week including nights and weekends. There were several vets in the community, if one wasn't available there was a host of others to call in an emergency. This is not the situation today. I am aware of only one large animal (general livestock) veterinary clinic in my area and very few equine vets. The effect of not enough vets results in delayed visits and at times the delay in care the results in negative outcomes that could have been avoided by more prompt care. Additionally, this can cause serious economic impact especially for a smaller operations.

The bottom line is that we need more qualified livestock (including equine) veterinarians throughout the state now. This legislation would provide twelve additional seats to Maryland students this year. More livestock veterinarians is necessary today! This legislation can always be reevaluated in the future should an accredited veterinary school open in the state of Maryland. In the meantime, the need is now to support farmers and livestock owners. I ask that in consideration of Maryland's farmers and livestock owners, you return a favorable report for SB745.

Respectfully,

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