



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Support of HB631 - Eminent Domain – Agricultural and Conservation Easements – Prohibited Taking

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I provide written testimony in support of HB631 Eminent Domain – Agricultural and Conservation Easements – Prohibited Taking. This bill aims to prohibit the State or its instrumentalities from taking privately owned property that is subject to a perpetual agricultural or conservation easement via eminent domain.

Maryland farmers work tirelessly to preserve agricultural land for future generations, safeguarding the state's agricultural heritage and ensuring food security for its citizens. Similarly, conservation easements are vital tools for protecting Maryland's natural resources and maintaining ecological balance. Eminent domain actions that target these lands undermine the very purpose of these preservation efforts and set a dangerous precedent.

The Maryland Farm Bureau's policies align strongly with the principles set forth in HB631. We oppose the taking of preserved agricultural land by eminent domain, as well as the taking of land protected by conservation easements. These actions not only diminish the effectiveness of preservation programs but also erode the trust and participation of landowners in such programs. HB631 provides essential safeguards to ensure that preserved lands remain protected, as originally intended.

This legislation is not only about protecting land; it is about honoring commitments made to Maryland's farmers and landowners who have voluntarily entered into preservation agreements. It also serves to uphold the state's broader goals of fostering sustainable agriculture, mitigating climate change, and conserving natural habitats.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB631

Sincerely,

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org with any questions