



Maryland Farm Bureau

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February 21, 2025

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support of SB580 Washington County – Public Safety – Buildings Used for Agritourism**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in support of SB580 Washington County – Public Safety – Buildings Used for Agritourism. This proposed legislation would add Washington County to the list of counties where an existing agricultural building used for agritourism is not considered a change of occupancy that requires a building permit.

In 2018, the General Assembly passed legislation allowing counties the opportunity to adopt a statewide definition of agritourism in zoning and/or other ordinances. Governor Hogan signed Chapter 672 of 2018 (House Bill 252) into law in May 2018. This law defines “agritourism” as an activity conducted on a farm that is offered to a member of the general public or to invited guests for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in the farm operation. This includes farm tours, hayrides, corn mazes, seasonal petting farms, farm museums, guest farms, pumpkin patches, “pick your own” or “cut your own” produce, classes related to agricultural products or skills, and picnic and party facilities offered in conjunction with any agritourism activity.

As of the 2022 USDA Census there were a total of 354 Agritourism operations in Maryland that brought in roughly 41 million to the Maryland economy.

Maryland Farm Bureau supports SB580

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', with a horizontal line above it.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

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