



Maryland Farm Bureau

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To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support of SB958 Agriculture - Catastrophic Damage Caused by Deer**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in support of SB958 Agriculture - Catastrophic Damage Caused by Deer. This bill authorizes the Department of Agriculture to take extraordinary measures to control local deer populations and prevent future crop loss if the Department determines that deer have caused catastrophic damage to a field.

Deer damage is a major problem facing our Maryland Farmers. In the last time that the USDA surveyed Maryland farmers regarding crop damage, deer were responsible for roughly 77 percent. Based on discussions with farmers statewide, it is estimated that average deer damage costs the farmer roughly \$50 per acre. Considering that Maryland has more than 1.2 million crop acres, deer could be causing as much as \$60 million in damage yearly.

This legislation represents a significant step forward in addressing the issue of deer damage in our state. Some areas are particularly vulnerable due to factors such as location, hunting pressure, and the characteristics of surrounding properties. In these high-risk areas, deer damage can result in the loss of up to 50% of a field's yield—or even complete devastation. SB958 provides a targeted solution, enabling authorities and property owners to take necessary, extraordinary measures in specific situations where intervention is crucial. By implementing these measures, the bill aims to mitigate current losses and establish protections to prevent future damage.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB958

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

Please reach out to Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions