



February 14, 2025

Subject: Support for Senate Bill 563-Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund

On behalf of the Maryland State Grange, Maryland's oldest agricultural organization, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 563, which seeks to increase funding for the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board. This bill will provide much-needed support to county fairs, community shows, agricultural exhibitions, and youth programs that are vital to the preservation and promotion of our state's rich agricultural heritage.

The Maryland State Grange has long been dedicated to advancing agricultural education, supporting rural communities, and fostering youth engagement in agriculture and related industries. The funding provided by the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board ensures that fairs and agricultural events across the state can continue to offer educational programming, showcase local farmers and producers, and provide hands-on opportunities for youth involved in organizations such as 4-H and FFA.

Agricultural fairs serve as a crucial connection between rural and urban communities, providing a platform for consumers to learn about Maryland's diverse agricultural industry. They also contribute significantly to the state's economy by supporting local businesses, agritourism, and food producers. Increased funding will help these fairs expand their impact, enhance educational exhibits, and maintain fairgrounds and infrastructure.

We urge you to support SB 563 to ensure that Maryland's agricultural fairs continue to thrive for generations to come. The Maryland State Grange stands ready to assist in advocating for this important investment in our state's agricultural future. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Stonebraker
President
Maryland State Grange