

Letter of Support SB580.pdf

Uploaded by: Amanda Brooks

Position: FAV



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 20, 2025

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **Support for Senate Bill 580—Washington County—Public Safety—Buildings Used for Agritourism**

Dear Senator Feldman:

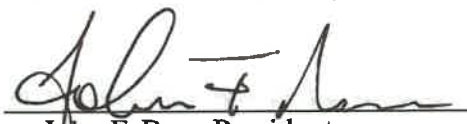
The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County (the “Board”) unanimously support the passage of SB 580. As currently drafted, SB 580 would add Washington County to the list of counties where an existing agricultural building used for agritourism is not considered a change of occupancy that requires a building permit under certain circumstances.

Passage of this bill would allow Washington County to join the thirteen other Counties that presently enjoy more flexible and forgiving requirements for the use of agricultural buildings used for agritourism. This bill will be particularly useful to Washington County because of the vast number of agricultural and agriculture-adjacent businesses that reside within the County. With its abundant farmland and many agricultural buildings, the County is poised to immediately reap the economic benefits of the passage of SB 580.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY:



John F. Barr, President

SB0580 -in person testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Erin moshier

Position: FAV

SB0580. Washington County Public Safety – buildings used for agritourism

Thank you for considering Senate bill 580. This bill will deregulate and boost growth in Washington County's agritourism sector, benefiting both farmers and their neighbors. By easing regulation on agritourism, this allows farmers to use their properties in new and dynamic ways. We aim to attract visitors, enhance economic development, support a vibrant local economy and promote our agricultural heritage.

Vote YES to ensure a sustainable future for our county's farming community. This will help foster partnerships between local businesses and agricultural enterprises, improve visitor experiences and create new revenue streams. It encourages educational programs, value-added agriculture and cultural events, therefore providing unique recreational opportunity for residents and tourists alike.

Deregulating existing farm outbuildings inspires farmers to adapt as agriculture evolves. From the retired commercial poultry house that can serve as a goat yoga studio, an old milk shed used as a farm store or, for me personally, my historic carriage house offering floral arrangements to my farm events and my customers... these buildings can bring life and revenue back to the farm.

The current expense of permits and commercial code requirements hinders or completely squashes these efforts.

Support bill 580 to promote growth, resilience, and community pride in Washington County.

Thank you,

Erin Moshier

Green Hill Farm

5329 Mondell Rd.

Sharpsburg, Maryland 21782

erinmoshier@gmail.com

240.329.6732

Letter of Support SB580.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Gordon

Position: FAV



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

February 20, 2025

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **Support for Senate Bill 580—Washington County—Public Safety—Buildings Used for Agritourism**

Dear Senator Feldman:

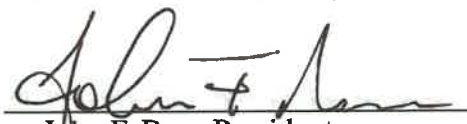
The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County (the “Board”) unanimously support the passage of SB 580. As currently drafted, SB 580 would add Washington County to the list of counties where an existing agricultural building used for agritourism is not considered a change of occupancy that requires a building permit under certain circumstances.

Passage of this bill would allow Washington County to join the thirteen other Counties that presently enjoy more flexible and forgiving requirements for the use of agricultural buildings used for agritourism. This bill will be particularly useful to Washington County because of the vast number of agricultural and agriculture-adjacent businesses that reside within the County. With its abundant farmland and many agricultural buildings, the County is poised to immediately reap the economic benefits of the passage of SB 580.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY:



John F. Barr, President

Evensong Farm LOS SB 580.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV



February 17, 2025

Dear Delegate Wivell and Senator Corderman,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB0749 and SB580, which aim to allow existing agricultural buildings to be utilized for agritourism without the need for a change of occupancy permit.

Agritourism offers valuable opportunities for farmers like me to diversify their income, educate the public about agriculture, and strengthen the local economy. It also gives the means and incentive for farmers to restore existing buildings and share open space with the community. By allowing these structures to serve dual purposes, we can preserve our agricultural heritage while fostering new business ventures.

The requirement for a change of occupancy permit can be cost-prohibitive and time-consuming, hindering farmers from adapting to changing market demands. By removing this barrier for agritourism, we can enhance the viability of family farms and encourage sustainable agricultural practices.

I urge you to support HB0749 and SB580 and help us unlock the full potential of my farm and our agricultural community as a whole.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,

Julie Stinar
Owner, Evensong Farm
18502 Burnside Bridge Rd
Sharpsburg, MD 21782
301-491-2224

Red Heifer Winery LOS SB 580.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV

Yvonne Ford
12840 Red Heifer Winery Lane
Smithsburg, MD 218783
yvonne@redheiferwinery.com
301-824-5210
2/17/2025

The Honorable William Wivell
PO Box 333
Smithsburg, MD 21783

Dear Delegate Wivell,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 0749, which proposes to include Washington County in the list of counties where an agricultural building used for agritourism is not considered a change of occupancy that requires a building permit under certain conditions. As a farm winery owner deeply invested in the growth of local agriculture and agritourism, I believe this bill represents a crucial step forward for both the agricultural community and the local economy.

Agritourism plays a vital role in promoting our agricultural heritage, creating jobs, and offering educational experiences that connect the public with farming practices. However, the regulatory barriers posed by the current requirement to obtain building permits when a farm structure is repurposed for agritourism can be burdensome and costly for small businesses like mine. This bill would provide much-needed flexibility for farmers and agritourism operators who wish to repurpose existing structures without incurring the financial and logistical strain of complying with permit requirements.

By including Washington County in this exemption, this legislation would promote innovation and growth in agritourism, ensuring that our local farmers and small businesses can continue to thrive. I am confident that this change would also lead to increased tourism and economic activity, benefiting not only agritourism operators but also local merchants, restaurants, and service providers.

I respectfully urge the support of this important piece of legislation, which will empower our agricultural community and contribute to the continued success of agritourism in Washington County.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions or require further input, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Ford
Owner, Red Heifer Winery
Red Heifer Winery LLC

SB 580 - Senator Corderman Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV

PAUL D. CORDERMAN
Legislative District 2
Frederick and Washington Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Education, Business and Administration



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 403
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3903 · 301-858-3903
800-492-7122 Ext. 3903
Paul.Corderman@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 25, 2025

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (EEE)
Chair Brian Feldman
Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the EEE Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 580 to you today. This bill simply adds “Washington County” to the list of other counties where an existing agricultural building used for agritourism is not considered a change of occupancy that requires a building permit under certain circumstances – specifically, if the building’s use of agritourism does not require it to be occupied by more than 200 people at any one time and the total width of egress for the building meets specified building code standards. Including Washington County in this list will allow farms within our community to operate more freely, offer more amenities to visitors, and as such grow the agritourism facets of their farms.

Additionally, the amendment exempts agricultural buildings used for agritourism from certain building performance standards. Including Washington County in both lists will allow farms within our community to operate more freely, offer more amenities to visitors, and as such grow the agritourism facets of their farms.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 580.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P.D. Corderman".

Paul D. Corderman
District 2 – Washington & Frederick Counties

SB 580 Amendment.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV



SB0580/603920/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

13 FEB 25
11:47:25

BY: Senator Corderman
(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 580

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 3, after “counties” insert “that exempt agricultural buildings used for agritourism from certain building performance standards and”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, in line 2, strike “and”; and in the same line, after the second “County” insert “, AND WASHINGTON COUNTY”.

SB 580 Support Letter Agritourism.SENATE.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Corderman

Position: FAV

DELEGATE WILLIAM WIVELL
CHAIR

DELEGATE TERRY BAKER
VICE CHAIR



SENATOR PAUL D. CORDERMAN
SENATOR MIKE MCKAY

DELEGATE MATTHEW J. SCHINDLER
DELEGATE WILLIAM VALENTINE

THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
WASHINGTON COUNTY DELEGATION

January 29th, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 Miller West Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman,

The Washington County Delegation voted unanimously in support of “SB0580 - Washington County - Public Safety - Buildings Used for Agritourism”. We respectfully request your support of this bill.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me by email at William.Wivell@house.state.md.us, or by phone at 410-841-3447.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. Wivell'.

William Wivell, Chair
Washington County Delegation

MDFB - Support - SB580 Washington County – Public

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau

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

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