

## **HB650\_Bishoff\_FAV**

Uploaded by: Bill Bishoff

Position: FAV

Garrett County Farm Bureau  
P. O. Box 161  
McHenry, MD 21541

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD

The Environment and Transportation Committee,

We are writing this in support of HB 650 - The Maryland Fair and Education Promise Act. Funding from the Special Fund has been making an important contribution to our community for many years.

The Garrett County Fair has been receiving reimbursement for the cost of prizes given to the winners of the exhibitor competitions. This encourages them to maintain an abundance of these opportunities which stimulates learning of the necessary skills to participate among the competitors as well as enlightenment of the people that view the competitions. These competitions are also a great way to help nurture cultural skills within the community. I suspect you would be amazed to see the hand crafted, traditional quilts that are entered in the quilt competition at the Garrett County Fair.

The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation helps support our agricultural teachers, curriculums and activities by coordinating the efforts of the agricultural education community and maintenance of mobile classrooms which allow students around the state to learn in a hands-on environment about where and how their food is produced. These mobile classrooms are in Garrett County on a regular basis.

The Special Fund helps the Garrett County Future Farmers of America (FFA) build life, business and leadership skills in addition to agricultural knowledge through their program. Many, many farmers in Garrett County are graduates of the FFA.

We understand that this may be a difficult year to discuss a funding request but we urge you to consider that this is not new funding. The Special Fund was created to provide a positive service with gambling revenues. It is shrinking because that gambling revenue is being produced in a different way as people gamble in a different way. We are simply trying to make an adjustment to follow where the revenue is being generated now.

In the big picture, this funding has a positive impact on a lot of people in all counties with very little money. We hope you can help.

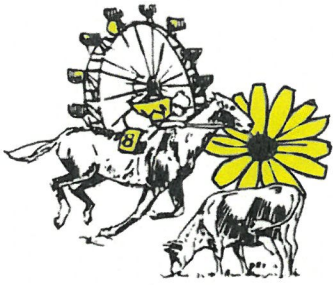
Thank you for your consideration,

Billy Bishoff  
Garrett County Farm Bureau

## **HB650 favorable testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: David Gordon

Position: FAV



# MARYLAND STATE FAIR

P.O. BOX 188, TIMONIUM, MARYLAND 21094-0188 410-252-0200 FAX 410-561-5610

D. Andrew Cashman  
General Manager  
Maryland State Fair  
2200 York Road  
Timonium, MD 21093  
acashman@marylandstatefair.com  
410-252-0200

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for HB650 – Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund -  
Establishment (Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act)

Dear Chairperson Korman and Members of the Committee,

I write to you today on behalf of the Maryland State Fair in support of HB650, legislation that will provide a stable and permanent funding source for the Maryland State Fair and other agricultural fairs and shows across the state that desperately need this funding. This bill is essential to maintaining and strengthening the agricultural heritage, education, and community engagement that these events provide.

Historically, the Maryland State Fair has received funding annually from the special fund, a sum tied to the 42 racing days we transferred to the state after discontinuing our summer horse race meet. Additionally, we, as well as many other fairs and shows, receive funding annually through the Maryland Agriculture Fair Board to support ribbons, awards, and other critical programming. These funds are vital to ensuring the success of our fair and the many other fairs and agricultural and community events across Maryland.

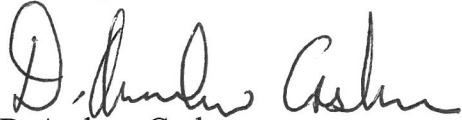
The special fund, primarily financed through unclaimed pari-mutuel tickets from horse racing, has become an increasingly unstable revenue source due to the decline in racing and wagering. Each year, we experience significant reductions in funding, creating uncertainty and making it difficult to budget for the programs and opportunities we offer. HB650 will provide a much-needed solution by reinforcing the intended financial commitments in the original statute and

ensuring a predictable funding stream for Maryland State Fair and the numerous other Maryland fairs and shows.

Agricultural fairs, including the Maryland State Fair, serve as vital educational and economic drivers in our communities. They offer hands-on learning experiences for youth, promote local agriculture, and provide a platform for small businesses, vendors, and entertainers. Without consistent funding, these contributions to our communities are at risk. By passing HB650, the General Assembly will help sustain these time-honored traditions and provide much-needed financial stability.

I respectfully urge the committee to give HB650 a favorable report to safeguard the future of the Maryland State Fair and the many other fairs and shows that enrich our state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Andrew Cashman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "D." being prominent and the last name "Cashman" written in a more continuous script.

D. Andrew Cashman  
General Manager  
Maryland State Fair

# **HB650\_RMC\_SupportTestimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Molli Cole

Position: FAV



50 Harry S. Truman Parkway • Annapolis, MD 21401  
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Email: [rmc.mda@maryland.gov](mailto:rmc.mda@maryland.gov)  
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*Susan O'Neill, Chair*

*Charlotte Davis, Executive Director*

Testimony in Support of  
House Bill 650 – Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund - Establishment  
(Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act)  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 12, 2025

**The Rural Maryland Council supports House Bill 650 – Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund - Establishment (Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act).** This bill establishes the Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund aimed at advancing agricultural fairs and education in the state. It requires that any interest earnings from the fund be credited back to it. Additionally, the bill allocates \$1,450,000 from the state lottery proceeds—before any funds are directed to the General Fund—to the Promise Fund. Lastly, it repeals the previous requirement that a specific amount of annual proceeds from the state horse racing special fund be used to promote agricultural fairs and education in the state.

Maryland's agricultural education and agricultural fairs play a vital role in the state's economy and community engagement.

Agricultural education in Maryland provides essential knowledge and skills to students and individuals interested in pursuing careers in agriculture, environmental science, and related fields. By teaching sustainable farming practices, animal husbandry, and the basics of agribusiness, these educational programs help cultivate the next generation of agricultural leaders. This education not only supports local farming communities but also ensures the continuation of agricultural traditions and innovations that are critical for food security and economic stability in Maryland.

Maryland agricultural fairs are also important for several reasons. These fairs serve as a platform to showcase local produce, livestock, and agricultural products, allowing farmers to connect directly with consumers. This strengthens the local economy by promoting the sale of Maryland-grown food and crafts. Additionally, fairs create a sense of community, bringing people together to celebrate the state's agricultural heritage through events like livestock shows, exhibits, and competitions.

Moreover, agricultural fairs often include educational components, such as workshops and demonstrations that inform participants about agriculture, sustainability, and food systems. These events foster an appreciation for farming and the challenges that farmers face, bridging the gap between urban and rural communities.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of House Bill 650.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county, and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county, and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic, or regulatory solutions.

*“A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland”*

## **Letter Supporting House Bill 650 2.pdf**

Uploaded by: Richard Stonebraker

Position: FAV



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February 10, 2025

Subject: Support for Maryland House Bill 650 – Maryland Agricultural Fair Board Funding

On behalf of the Maryland State Grange, Maryland's oldest agricultural organization, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 650 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 HB 650 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

# **MDFB - Support - HB650 Maryland Fair and Agricultu**

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035

410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

February 10, 2025

**To:** House Environment and Transportation Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE: Support of HB650 - Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund - Establishment (Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act)**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in favor of HB650 Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund - Establishment (Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act). This legislation would establish the Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund to advance agricultural fairs and education in the State.

Agricultural education plays a crucial role in shaping the next generation of leaders, farmers, and informed consumers. Programs such as 4-H, FFA, and agricultural education in schools provide hands-on learning experiences that connect students to the agricultural industry while also teaching them valuable life skills. Through participation in these programs, young people develop leadership abilities, teamwork, problem-solving skills, and strong work ethic—qualities that benefit them regardless of their career paths. Additionally, agricultural education fosters a deeper appreciation for the role of farming in our economy, food supply, and environmental sustainability, helping to build a well-informed citizenry that supports and understands agriculture's significance.

Currently, the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board, the Maryland State Fair, and the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation depend on funding from a non-lapsing special fund, which has traditionally been sustained by unclaimed racing mutuels. These funds have been instrumental in supporting agricultural fairs, youth programs, and hands-on educational experiences that inspire and educate the next generation. However, with the rapid expansion of online gambling, the revenue generated from unclaimed racing mutuels has dwindled, resulting in a significant shortfall in available funding. Consequently, many programs that rely on these funds to operate effectively have seen reductions in resources, limiting their ability to provide opportunities for students and communities.

Ensuring the continued success of agricultural education programs is essential not only for the students who directly benefit but also for the broader agricultural industry and local economies. These programs contribute to workforce development, fostering a pipeline of skilled individuals who will drive innovation and sustainability in agriculture. Without adequate funding, access to agricultural education and hands-on learning experiences will decline, potentially leading to long-term consequences for industry and rural communities. To maintain and expand these critical programs, alternative funding solutions must be explored, and policymakers must prioritize investment in agricultural education. Supporting these initiatives is

not just about preserving tradition, it is about securing a strong future for Maryland's agricultural sector and ensuring that young people have the knowledge and skills to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough", is positioned below a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough  
Director of Government Relations

Please reach out to Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions

# **HB 650 - Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Beskid

Position: INFO

# Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency

Wes Moore, Governor • John Martin, Director



Montgomery Park Business Center  
1800 Washington Blvd., Ste. 330  
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Tel: 410-230-8800  
TTY users call Maryland Relay  
www.mdlottery.com

**DATE:** February 10, 2025  
**BILL NO:** House Bill 650  
**BILL TITLE:** Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund - Establishment (Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act)  
**COMMITTEE:** Environment and Transportation  
**POSITION:** Information

The Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (“MLGCA” or “Agency”) provides the following information regarding House Bill 650, Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund - Establishment (Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act).

## Bill Summary:

HB 650 proposes establishing the Maryland Fair and Agricultural Promise Fund. The fund would provide grants to advance agricultural fairs and education in the State. The fund would consist of revenue distributed to the fund under § 9-120 (B)(1)(XIV) of the State Government Article.

## Background:

The allocation of funds from the State Lottery Fund to special funds decreases the amount of money transferred to the General Fund. Allocating any additional revenue from the State Lottery Fund will place the State’s AA Bond Rating at risk of being downgraded. The Board of Revenue Estimates (BRE) considers total lottery revenues and makes projections based on the revenues less the current distributions. Table 1 reflects the projected distribution of lottery funds as well as the coverage amounts for mandated disbursements. The coverage amount is determined by dividing the total lottery revenue by the total mandated disbursement. When the coverage amount is 3.1x or lower, the bond rating can be downgraded. BRE has projected, based on current allocations, that the coverage amount will be 3.1x in FY26 and 2.9x in FY27 and FY28. Adding an additional allocation of \$1.45 million reduces the coverage further leaving Maryland at risk of having its AA Bond rating downgraded.

**Table 1 – Projected Coverage Amounts**

Distribution of Lottery Fund (Millions)	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
<b>TOTAL LOTTERY REVENUE</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>666</b>
MD Stadium Facilities	14.2	14.2	3.4	3.4
Camden Yards - Football	34.9	34.9	45.0	45.0
Camden Yards - Baseball		40.9	41.6	41.6
MD Veterans Trust Fund	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3

RCDFE		29.3	29.3	29.3
AA County & Baltimore City	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.0
Baltimore City School Construction	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.
MD International Fund				
Michael E. Busch Sports Fund	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
MD Humanities Council for History	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Maggie McIntosh School Arts Fund	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Sports Entertainment Facilities Financing Fund	12.4	12.4	25.0	25.0
Major Sports & Entertainment Event Program Fund	7.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
MD DOT Bus Rapid Transit System	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0
PGCFF	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0
<b>TOTAL MANDATED DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>COVERAGE OF MANDATED DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>4.6x</b>	<b>3.1x</b>	<b>2.9x</b>	<b>2.9x</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>440</b>

**Rationale:**

The Agency offers you this information for your consideration as you debate HB 650.

Should you have any questions about this Letter of Information, please contact Jennifer Beskid, Director Legislation and Policy at 443-571-4390 or [Jennifer.beskid1@maryland.gov](mailto:Jennifer.beskid1@maryland.gov).