



February 14, 2025

House Bill 0907- Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property - Alterations
House Ways and Means Committee

Position: Support

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Farm Alliance of Baltimore, founded in 2011, is a nonprofit dedicated to urban agriculture and food justice, comprising a vibrant network of 48 member farms, community gardens, and growers. Each member contributes to our mission of fostering sustainable urban agriculture and enhancing food sovereignty in Baltimore. By working together, our diverse group shares resources, knowledge, and support, amplifying our impact in the community.

The Farm Alliance of Baltimore writes to support **House Bill 0907 - Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property - Alterations**. In 2014, the Maryland General Assembly passed **HB223 - Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property – Applicability**, which expanded the urban farm property tax credit beyond Baltimore City to the entire state of Maryland. **HB0907 clarifies important aspects of the Urban Farm Property Tax Credit and removes unnecessary restrictions that have created barriers to accessing the credit**. This bill provides the framework for an urban farm property tax credit and grants each county the ability to implement county-level legislation that best fits the needs of their local residents and governance within the guidelines of HB0907.

The Urban Farm Property Tax Credit increases healthy food access across Maryland by:

- Making urban farming more economically viable.
- Encouraging farms to support their local communities or donate food to food banks by requiring farmers to sell or donate at least \$1,000 worth of farm goods.
- Creating stability through a multi-year tax benefit.
- Encouraging environmentally responsible practices through required and optional relationships with county Soil Conservation Districts.
- Promoting land access for underserved farmers by providing an incentive for landowners to lease property to urban farmers.

While this bill supports urban agriculture, many of our farmers have been unable to benefit from it due to their land being leased from the city. **We would like to see the benefits of this bill extended across Maryland to ensure that small-scale farmers receive the support they need to continue their vital work.**

Additionally, broadening eligibility to include **indoor and outdoor crop production activities, value-added agricultural products, beekeeping, raising livestock, and composting** will make the bill more accessible and impactful.

Finally, many of our members are beginning and underserved farmers working toward land ownership. **These amendments would make this bill more inclusive and provide the support they need to take their operations to the next level, ultimately increasing healthy food access across the state.**

Urban farms are diverse in their operations, and their existence allows residents to see where their food comes from, promotes healthy eating habits, and supports a healthier environment. **HB0907 recognizes the diversity of farm operations, the land they cultivate, and the urban settings in which they operate.** We fully support this bill and respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 0907 to ensure a resilient and robust food system for all of Maryland.

For more information, please contact:

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