



February 14, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee

Re: House Bill 907 – Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property - Alterations

Position: Support

Chair Atterbeary & Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) I am writing to express our support for **House Bill 907, – Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property - Alterations**. MASCD, incorporated in 1956, promotes practical and effective soil, water, and natural resource related programs to all Marylanders. Through individual conservation districts MASCD provides leadership, education, cooperation, and local direction, on a voluntary basis. MASCD contains thousands of success stories ranging from innovative conservation techniques to waterway management. Conservation districts are locally led to address soil and water issues at the district level while also connecting their farmers and residents to resources at the state and federal level.

This bill would broaden eligibility for tax credit against county or municipal corporation property tax imposed on urban agricultural property. Under this legislation, urban agricultural purposes are expanded to include indoor and outdoor crop production, production of value-added agricultural products, beekeeping, raising livestock, composting, pollinator habitat creation and maintenance, agricultural education and agritourism activities. Additionally, this legislation would require a county or municipal corporation that grants the credit to provide notice of the termination of the credit at least 1 year in advance and provide the opportunity to be heard to the public.

Agricultural operations continue to expand within our urban landscapes in Maryland, doing everything from beekeeping to growing vegetables and flowers. Farming techniques such as vertical farming and hoop houses have been implemented to help contribute to a sustainable food network. These farmers have worked well within the urban environment, but at times face unique issues such as soil quality, stormwater management on non-agricultural parcels, neighbors, and much more. By providing these resilient farmers with additional resources and financial assistance we can help promote and grow urban agriculture within our high-density landscapes. We respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 907. Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Nelson, Executive Director
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts