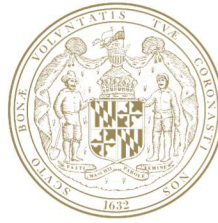


JEFFERSON L. GHRIST  
Co-CHAIR

NATALIE ZIEGLER  
Co-CHAIR



H. KEVIN ANDERSON  
TERRY BAKER  
KEVIN B. HORNBERGER  
ANDRE V. JOHNSON, JR.  
STEVE JOHNSON  
SHEREE SAMPLE-HUGHES

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
HOUSE RURAL CAUCUS

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
121 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the Rural Caucus, we are writing to express our support for **HB 609 State Transfer Tax - Land Preservation Special Fund - Revenue Allocation**.

HB 609 protects the State's Land Preservation Special Fund by preventing a scheduled transfer of dedicated transfer tax revenue into the General Fund. Instead, the transfer tax revenue is allocated to Program Open Space state land acquisition, the Rural Legacy Program, and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. For rural communities, this bill provides more consistent funding for farmland preservation and conservation easements, helping farmers keep land in agricultural use.

For these reasons, the Rural Caucus supports HB 609 and requests a favorable report.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jefferson L. Ghrist".

Delegate Jefferson L. Ghrist  
*Co-Chair*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Natalie Ziegler".

Delegate Natalie Ziegler  
*Co-Chair*