



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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## House Bill 1342

### Agriculture – Controlled – Environment and Hydroponic Agriculture

**Date:** March 6, 2026

**To:** Environment and Transportation Committee

**Position:** **Favorable**

**From:** Rob Schnabel,  
MD Restoration Scientist

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **supports House Bill 1342** which provides increased funding for controlled-environment and hydroponic agriculture through Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA's) Small Farms and Urban Agriculture program through water and power infrastructure grants. This Bill also creates a workforce training partnership between MDA and Community Colleges, requires flexibility in local zoning provisions to allow for controlled-environment and hydroponic agriculture while also requiring percentage goals through procurement contracts for food from certified local farms.

CBF coordinated monthly meetings with the Urban Agriculture community from 2023 – 2025 through a federal equity grant. Stakeholders shared concerns that water and power infrastructure is a limiting factor in establishing farms in urban environments. MDA established the Small Farms and Urban Agriculture program to address these concerns and funding needs within the Community. The Department's Water and Power Grants are a critical funding component. Funding through this program is a small percentage of MDA's overall conservation grants program and targets providing food within local urban communities. With over 30% of Maryland's families food insecure, not sure where their next meal will come from, this proposed legislation will work towards growing food where it is needed most and provides the training necessary to move this initiative forward. Equity across the food producing community is critical to ensure resilience in Maryland.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 1342.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*