



Maryland Farm Bureau

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March 11, 2026

To: Senate Finance Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Support with Amendment SB804 Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety and Health - Revisions to Heat Stress Standards

On behalf of the over 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony of support with amendments to SB804 Labor and Employment - Occupational Safety and Health - Revisions to Heat Stress Standards. SB 804 establishes extensive new requirements for employers whose workers are exposed to temperatures of at least 80 degrees Fahrenheit, including developing written heat illness prevention plans, providing shade and water, implementing acclimatization protocols, monitoring workplace temperatures, establishing high-heat procedures beginning at 90 degrees Fahrenheit, and expanding employee training obligations. These provisions apply broadly to indoor and outdoor workplaces unless a listed exemption applies. While the Farm Bureau supports reasonable measures to protect workers from heat-related illness, the bill's framework as drafted would impose substantial and unintended burdens on Maryland's agricultural sector, which already operates within existing federal and state safety standards and faces unique environmental and economic conditions.

Agricultural work is inherently tied to seasonal weather patterns and requires operational flexibility to meet crop, livestock, and harvest needs. Many of the bill's requirements, including mandatory acclimatization plans, prescribed shaded rest areas, temperature monitoring methods, high-heat procedure mandates, and written documentation obligations are structured in a way that aligns more closely with fixed industrial or construction settings than with agricultural environments. For example, the bill requires employers to monitor temperatures throughout the work shift, provide specific shaded areas meeting detailed structural criteria, and implement written high-heat response procedures whenever temperatures reach at least 90 degrees. Such prescriptive standards do not account for the diversity of Maryland farms, many of which are small, family-run operations without the physical infrastructure or staff capacity to meet these highly technical compliance obligations.

For these reasons, the Maryland Farm Bureau respectfully requests an amendment to **exempt agricultural workers from the requirements of SB 804**. This amendment would preserve the bill's purpose while avoiding duplicative, impractical, and economically challenging mandates on Maryland farms that already comply with federal OSHA guidelines and continuously adapt to their working environments. An agricultural exemption would align SB 804 with the reality that agricultural work is not only distinct in nature but also already governed by long-standing practices, safety protocols, and environmental variability that cannot be easily codified into the



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standardized regulatory structure proposed in the bill. Providing this exemption ensures that Maryland agriculture remains viable while still allowing the state to strengthen protections for workers in industries for which the bill's framework is better suited.

With the inclusion of an agricultural exemption amendment, the Maryland Farm Bureau would be pleased to support SB 804. We urge the committee to adopt the requested amendment and issue a favorable report on SB 804 with amendments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the name.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions