



## Maryland Farm Bureau

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February 10, 2026

**To:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE:** Support of SB451 - Eminent Domain – Just Compensation – Fees and Costs

On behalf of the more than 7,000 members of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I respectfully submit written testimony in support of SB451 – Eminent Domain – Just Compensation – Fees and Costs. This legislation would clarify that, in a condemnation proceeding, “just compensation” includes not only the fair market value of the land taken, but also any legal, expert, or other fees or costs reasonably incurred by the landowner in defending their property rights.

Maryland farmers devote substantial time, resources, and capital to managing their land, often over multiple generations. Farmland is not only the foundation of each farm operation, but also a key component of Maryland’s agricultural heritage, rural landscapes, and local food supply. When eminent domain is exercised, the financial and administrative burden placed on landowners can be overwhelming. Condemnation cases are frequently lengthy, complex, and costly, requiring farmers to hire attorneys, appraisers, engineers, and other experts simply to ensure that the valuation of their property is fair and accurate.

Under current law, even if a farmer prevails in an eminent domain challenge, demonstrating that the state’s valuation was inadequate, they may still be responsible for tens of thousands of dollars in legal and expert costs. These expenses can jeopardize the financial stability of a family farming operation, undermining its ability to maintain production, invest in the next growing season, or retain ownership of the remaining land.

SB451 helps level the playing field by ensuring that landowners are not financially punished for asserting their constitutional right to just compensation. Covering legal and expert fees is a reasonable and necessary measure to protect Maryland’s agricultural community from undue hardship. This legislation would help preserve farmland, support the long-term viability of farm businesses, and uphold the principle that property owners should be made whole when their land is taken for public use.

For these reasons, the Maryland Farm Bureau urges a favorable report on SB451.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', with a horizontal line above it.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please reach out to Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions