

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2025, Legislative Day No. 12

Bill No. 49-25

Councilmembers Kach, Marks, Jones, Patoka & Ertel

By the County Council, July 7, 2025

A BILL
ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

County Charter – Department of Agriculture – Establishment

FOR the purpose of amending the County Charter to establish a Department of Agriculture; requiring that the Department be administered by an appointed director that is responsible directly to the County Administrative Officer; requiring that the Department have the necessary personnel to carry out its functions and duties; establishing the duties of the Department, including the promotion of agriculture as a viable component of the County's economic sector, and other duties as assigned by the County Administrative Officer or under County law; and generally relating to the Baltimore County Charter.

BY repealing and re-enacting, with amendments

Section 504
Article V – The Administrative Services
Division 1 – Outline of Organization
Baltimore County Charter

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.
[Brackets] indicate matter stricken from existing law.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from bill.
Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

BY adding

Sections 542.9 and 542.10

Article V – The Administrative Services

Division 3 – Departments in The Administrative Services

Subdivision 16 – Department of Agriculture

Baltimore County Charter

WHEREAS, agriculture is a significant contributor to the economy, agricultural and environmental stewardship, public health, and quality of life in Baltimore County with disciplines encompassing all economic levels; and

WHEREAS, agriculture touches nearly every one of the Baltimore County Agencies, but often plays a secondary role within the decision-making of each agency; however, when considering the culminative value, agriculture plays a significant role in health, environmental sustainability, planning, natural resources, public works, recreation, social services, food access, food safety, environmental sustainability, emergency disaster relief, tourism, rural workforce and more; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is fragmented across numerous County Agencies, with no single dedicated leadership role to administer and understand the various programs, funding sources, and grants offered by local, State, and federal agencies at the Baltimore County Agricultural Center, resulting in duplication of services, delays in regulatory transparency, slower reviews of plans submitted to the Soil Conservation District, and underutilization of State and federal funds for County initiatives and emergency disasters; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to develop a more effective means of assuring that the agriculture sector of Baltimore County will be an integral part of the local decision-making process of Baltimore County Government; now therefore

1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE
2 COUNTY, MARYLAND, that under the authority granted to it by Section 1202 of the Baltimore
3 County Charter, Section 504 of Article V – The Administrative Services of the Baltimore County
4 Charter is proposed to be repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, and Sections 542.9 and
5 542.10 of Article V – The Administrative Services of the Baltimore County Charter are proposed
6 to be added, and to read as follows:

7
8 Article V – The Administrative Services

9 Division 1 – Outline of Organization

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11 Section 504. Departments.

12 There shall be the following departments in the administrative services:

- 13 (1) Department of public works.
- 14 (2) Department of permits, approvals, and inspections.
- 15 (3) Department of recreation and parks.
- 16 (4) Department of environmental protection and sustainability.
- 17 (5) Department of education.
- 18 (6) Department of libraries.
- 19 (7) Department of health.
- 20 (8) Department of social services.
- 21 (9) Police department.
- 22 (10) Fire department.
- 23 (11) Department of aging.

1 (12) Department of planning.

2 (13) Department of corrections.

3 (14) Department of economic and workforce development.

4 (15) DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

5
6 Division 3 – Departments in The Administrative Services

7 SUBDIVISION 16 – DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

8
9 SECTION 542.9. DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND PERSONNEL.

10 (A) THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY A
11 DIRECTOR WHO SHALL BE APPOINTED SOLELY WITH REGARD TO THE
12 QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE. THE DIRECTOR SHALL BE
13 RESPONSIBLE DIRECTLY TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER.

14 (B) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL HAVE SUCH PERSONNEL AS DEEMED
15 NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES ASSIGNED TO THE
16 DEPARTMENT.

17
18 SECTION 542.10. FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
19 AGRICULTURE.

20 THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SHALL PROMOTE AGRICULTURE AS
21 A VIABLE COMPONENT OF THE COUNTY’S ECONOMIC SECTOR, ENCOURAGE
22 LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION AS A METHOD OF ADDRESSING
23 FOOD INSECURITY IN THE COUNTY, AND SHALL PERFORM SUCH OTHER DUTIES

1 AND FUNCTIONS AS MAY BE ASSIGNED FROM TIME TO TIME BY DIRECTIVE OF
2 THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OR BY LEGISLATIVE ACT OF THE
3 COUNTY COUNCIL.

4
5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that pursuant to Section 1202 of the
6 Baltimore County Charter, the question of whether or not the Charter is to be amended as
7 proposed by this Act shall be submitted to the voters of Baltimore County at the general election
8 on November 3, 2026, and that this Act shall be published in at least two newspapers of general
9 circulation in the County for five successive weeks prior to the election.

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11 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that upon ratification by the voters of
12 Baltimore County, this Act shall become effective from and after the thirtieth day following the
13 2026 general election.



LEGISLATION DETAIL

LEGISLATION

DISPOSITION

ENACTED

EFFECTIVE

AMENDMENTS

ROLL CALL - BILL

MOTION

SECOND

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NAY

☐☐

Councilman Young

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Councilman Patoka

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Councilman Kach

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Councilman Jones

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Councilman Marks

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Councilman Ertel

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Councilman Crandell

ROLL CALL - AMENDMENTS

MOTION

SECOND

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Councilman Young

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Councilman Patoka

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Councilman Kach

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Councilman Jones

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Councilman Marks

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Councilman Ertel

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Councilman Crandell

ROLL CALL - AMENDMENTS

MOTION

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Councilman Young

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Councilman Patoka

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Councilman Kach

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Councilman Jones

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Councilman Marks

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Councilman Ertel

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Councilman Crandell

ROLL CALL - AMENDMENTS

MOTION

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Councilman Young

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Councilman Patoka

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Councilman Kach

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Councilman Jones

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Councilman Marks

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Councilman Ertel

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Councilman Crandell