



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 2, 2021

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Opposition of HB1282 - Real Property – Nuisance Actions – Rodent Harborage**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony opposing HB 1282. This bill authorizes an individual to bring a nuisance action for damages caused by rodent harborage on real property against an owner of the property. It defines "rodent harborage" as a condition that provides sustenance or shelter for rodents, promotes their reproduction and continued existence on a property, creates or contributes to property damage, is injurious to public health and safety or obstructs the reasonable use of the property. The bill authorizes the court to award compensatory and punitive damages to a prevailing plaintiff.

There is no farm exemption in the bill and if someone has a house on an adjacent property, this bill could allow them to bring a nuisance lawsuit on the farm.

The Maryland Right-to-Farm law protects agricultural operations, such as dairy, livestock, grain, fruit, vegetables, and poultry, or traditional forestry operations, with an affirmative defense to nuisance suits. However, this bill could override that Right-to-Farm protection.

MDFB Policy: We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal production practices.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU RESPECTFULLY OPPOSES HB 1282

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396