



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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February 17, 2021

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 860 - State Planning – Preservation of Agricultural Land – Goal**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 860, legislation that simply extends and codifies an unwritten State goal of preserving a total of 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land to 2030 through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, the Maryland GreenPrint Program, the Rural Legacy Program, the Maryland Environmental Trust, and local land preservation programs. The previous goal was to expire in 2022.

This bill does not include MARBIDCO's Small Farm Next Generation Ag Land Acquisition Program. **We ask for a simple amendment to include the Small Farm Next Gen program.**

**MDFB Policy:** We urge full funding by the state and counties for agland preservation programs, including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program. Payments for these programs should reflect current market values for farmland.

Furthermore, we urge the state and county governments to continue to support the voluntary preservation of agricultural land with substantial increases in funding. We encourage them to work with all interested stakeholders to develop innovative voluntary programs that maximize farmland preservation while protecting landowner equity and private property rights and not negatively impacting any other rights running with the land.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 860 WITH AMENDMENT**

Colby Ferguson  
Director of Government Relations

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