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Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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**The Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 32 Worcester County – Public Safety – Buildings Used for Agritourism
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza**

Thank you, Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 32, which simply adds Worcester County to the list of jurisdictions in which farm structures used for agritourism activities are exempted from certain requirements generally applied to commercial buildings. I am supporting this legislation with an amendment to change the effective date of this bill to June 1st to maximize the summer tourism season.

Specifically, this legislation would exempt an agriculture building in Worcester County used for agritourism from obtaining a change of occupancy permit if the building's use of agritourism does not require it to be occupied by more than 200 people at any one time.

Many of you have enjoyed the beautiful farm landscape driving east along Route 50 on your way to Ocean City or driving south on Route 113 from the Delaware line into Worcester County giving you a glimpse of the many multi-generational family farms in my district. This legislation is a win-win for both the farm families who may need to diversify and pull in additional revenue just to keep the farm and for tourists who will have more options to explore and experience our local farms.

I especially am proud of the leadership of the Worcester County Commissioners and their Office of Tourism for the extra effort they have been making to give our farm families more options to diversify and expand rather than selling their valuable farm land for development. Senate Bill 32 would be a successful tool in giving more local farms the opportunity to protect their way of life in new and creative ways.

Worcester County would be joining 18 other local jurisdictions in making similar exemptions to secure this agritourism building exemption through Senate Bill 32. This local bill has broad, strong support from the Worcester County Commissioners and its tourism office, the Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association, Maryland Tourism Coalition, Maryland Farm Bureau, Grow & Fortify, and Value Added Agriculture.

I respectfully ask my colleagues and friends on the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for a favorable report on Senate Bill 32 as amended. It is an important local priority for Worcester County.