



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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March 11, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: Support of HB 646 – Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Funding for Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB646. This is legislation that requires the Governor to appropriate \$900,000 to the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland from the Cigarette Restitution Fund in fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter. It also requires the funds appropriated under the Act to be used for the purpose of funding the activities of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC).

For many years now, farmers in Southern Maryland have utilized the Cigarette Restitution funds to transition out of tobacco production and into other sectors of production agriculture like fruit and vegetable production as well as direct to consumer sales. Continuing these funds is critical to assisting farmers as they continue to find ways to remain profitable in an area of the state where the competition for land use steadily increases year after year. SMADC has been very effective at creating opportunities for farmers in Southern Maryland, and we recommend that process continue.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: We support the State of Maryland increasing funding to the Tri-County Councils for the purpose of including and funding agricultural and natural resources development in their mission.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 646 AND ENCOURAGES A FAVORABLE REPORT.**

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*