

I am Dr Chantal Brooks, retired physician and newly minted farmer! In 2016, my family and I moved to Prince George's County and started a small beef cattle farm called 804 Cattle Company. We currently sell pasture raised beef to the local community through an online website. We provide on farm pickups and monthly deliveries.

I am here today in strong support for HB0646, Tri County Council for Southern Maryland-Funding for Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission. This bill is asking for an annual budget of \$900,000 from the Cigarette Restitution Fund to be funded to the Tri County Council of Southern Maryland for their SMADC department. The CRF fund is part of the Master Settlement Agreement that comes into the state every year in perpetuity. SMADC currently receives \$900,000 from that fund however it is due to sunset soon; this bill will ensure that SMADC continues to receive funding from the continual non-lapsing fund.

SMADC serves 2011 farms in the 5 county Southern Maryland area of which we are one. 804 Cattle Company has worked closely with SMADC in these last 5 years and they indeed have been our "go to" resource for marketing, helping us develop informative flyers and pamphlets for public distribution, as well as marketing of our farm through websites, articles and videos. They have helped us meet and work with other farmers in the area; and finally have provided valuable insights on state funded assistance programs.

In addition to their marketing of our farm their grants have allowed us to improve our cattle handling facilities as well as purchase freezers so that we could expand to meet the demands of Maryland residents facing meat shortages during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Their mission to provide farmers with centralized information to grow their potential AND for consumers to access these same farms is one that they have fulfilled many times over.

This organization is key to farming success in Southern Maryland and must be supported.

Thank you for your attention.

