



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

February 16, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 558 - Land Use - Agritourism - Definition**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 558, legislation that adds Camping and Incidental Outdoor Stays to the state definition of Agritourism. The bill does not require the local government to implement new regulation, but instead enables them to include Camping on farms as an agritourism activity if the county so chooses.

Camping on farms has become more and more popular because of the COVID-19 pandemic as hotel stays were difficult to get and many people wanted to stay more remote and more in the open air to remain safe. Like Air B&B, farm camping websites have been created to allow those interested a way to find places in the area they are looking to stay. Allowing farms to diversify so they can improve their income generated from the farm, should be Maryland's top priority if there is to be increased financial sustainability for our farms in the future.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

- We support incidental outdoor stays as an accessory use on a working farm.
- Agritourism should be defined as activities conducted on a farm and offered to the public or to invited groups for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in the farm operation.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 558 AND REQUEST 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