



FOREVER
MARYLAND

Enhancing and Advancing Land Conservation

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Date: February 12, 2021

Bill Number: HB 860 - State Planning – Preservation of Agricultural Land – Goal

Committee: House Environment & Transportation

Position: Support

The Forever Maryland Foundation supports, HB 860 - State Planning – Preservation of Agricultural Land – Goal for the purpose of furthering the preservation of important, productive, agricultural land by the year 2030.

Simply put, this bill establishes a state preservation goal of 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land conserved by 2030, through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, Maryland GreenPrint Program, Rural Legacy Program, Maryland Environmental Trust, and local land preservation programs.

Every five years, local Maryland governments update their Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans (LPPRP) - which is a prerequisite for county participation in Program Open Space. From historical and cultural preservation, to habitat protection and more, there are various purposes for the conservation or preservation of land. However, not all county LPPRPs include the evaluation of agricultural lands or place an equal emphasis on the importance of these lands. Furthermore, county plans do not easily match up toward a specific statewide goal.

It is vitally important that Maryland ensure enough productive acreage for the viability of the agricultural industry and provide access to locally sourced foods. This is not only critical to Maryland's rural economy, but also Maryland's urban economy, including new urban farms and restaurants.

The Forever Maryland Foundation is dedicated to the conservation of our state's land, water, wildlife, and other natural values. If further information is requested, please contact the organization's Program and Policy Director, Josh Hastings, at 443-640-1034 Ex. 1267 or Josh@ForeverMaryland.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

We respectfully request a favorable report.

FOREVER MARYLAND FOUNDATION

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