



## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **LEGISLATIVE COMMENT**

**DATE: January 26, 2016      BILL NO.: SB 110**

**SUBJECT: AGRICULTURE – YOUNG FARMERS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

**COMITTEE: EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**MDA POSITION:    SUPPORT**

#### **EXPLANATION:**

SB0110 would add a Maryland State FFA (Future Farmers of America) officer and an urban farmer to the Maryland Young Farmers Advisory Board. The bill would also increase the number of “General Public” members by six.

#### **COMMENT:**

The urban farmer and the state FFA officer membership designations are needed because under current law, the statute requires that general public members derive at least 50 percent of the member’s personal income from farming or agricultural activities. The board recognizes the need for an urban farmer to sit on the board. The Board also feels that a state FFA officer could be a unique perspective and insight to the group. FFA is a national inter-curricular student organization for those interested in agriculture and leadership. Under current law, both of these representatives would be hindered by the income requirement.

In addition, the Board is looking to address the gaps in commodity and regional representation on the Board. The Board composition currently only allows for eight general public positions. The Maryland Young Farmers Advisory Board and MDA are proposing to add an additional six general public positions for a total of fourteen general public positions. This would allow the Board to represent a larger diversity of Maryland agricultural commodities and geographically represent more areas of the state.

**MDA requests a favorable report for SB 110.**