



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### LEGISLATIVE COMMENT

**DATE: 03/08/2018**

**BILL No.: HB 1532**

**SUBJECT: HIGHER EDUCATION - MARYLAND LOAN ASSISTANCE  
REPAYMENT PROGRAM FARMERS**

**COMITTEE: HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS**

**MDA POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

#### **EXPLANATION:**

This bill creates the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Farmers within the Office of Student Financial Assistance at the Department of Education

#### **COMMENT:**

Agriculture is a science and thus offers many related opportunities, apprenticeships and careers. By expanding the perception of agricultural education to include veterinary science, turf management, food development/research, food science, nutrition, food preservation, web developer, supply chain, food safety, equine, and the environment, students will have a broader spectrum of agriculture related careers.

A recent study by BEACON at Salisbury University and Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) states that the economic impact of resource based industries (RBI) in 2015 equaled \$23.3 billion, supported over 94,500 jobs, and generated nearly \$902 million in state and local tax revenue for Maryland. Of the RBI industries, the Food, Feed, and Fiber production industries (which include agriculture, forestry, seafood, and aquaculture) accounts for \$19.66 billion in economic activity (84.4% of the RBI total), 83,619 supported jobs (88.5% of the RBI total), and \$753 million in state and local tax revenue (83.5% of the RBI total).

According to Maryland CTE Data website, there were 4,433 students enrolled in the [Maryland Public Schools CTE Enrollment for Environmental, Agricultural and Natural Resources - EANR in 2016](#). With an estimated 83, 619 jobs in agriculture and other resource-based industries and only 4,433 students enrolled in EANR, the employment opportunities for those with expertise in food, agriculture, renewable natural resources, and environmental industries will increase in this sector.

There's a strong need to incentive our future farmers, to pursue educational opportunities post high school and to provide them with the tools and resources they need to achieve their goals.