

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
**COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



James R. Guy, President
Eric Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner
John E. O'Connor, Commissioner

March 9, 2021

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor of Maryland
State House 100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Reduction in the FY2022 budget

Dear Governor Hogan:


The Commissioners of St. Mary's County support the request of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Center (SMADC) to be appropriated additional funding through a supplemental budget in the amount of \$450,000 to reach level funding from Fiscal Year 2021.

SMADC was previously funded in the regular FY21 at \$900,000 but that funding was reduced to \$675,000. An additional \$225,000 cut is now proposed in the State Budget for FY22, which brings total SMADC funding down to \$450,000. Such cuts would be devastating to SMADC, our regional farmers and small agribusiness economy. SMADC impacts 2,011 farms on over 205,000 acres in the five-county area and all Maryland counties through the Maryland Market Money Program, Buy Local Challenge Program, and Farmlink & MentorMatch Program.

The Regional Agriculture Center is about to break ground this year and without sufficient funds to complete and open it, all the effort and funds invested in this project will be in jeopardy. In addition, the USDA just approved the first ever USDA certified slaughterhouse in Southern Maryland and SMADC is working with three private entities to make that a reality in the next few months. These two achievements will help boost the economy of Southern Maryland agriculture, and will serve our region any beyond. Without funding SMADC will lose staff and programs and will be unable to make these projects a success.

Therefore, we request that the SMADC total budget be level funded to \$900,000, through a supplemental budget in the amount of \$450,000 to reach level funding from Fiscal Year 2021. Without funding, SMADC will be unable to provide essential services to the farming community and rural businesses. If SMADC dissolves there would be no one left to run the soon to be built Regional Agriculture Center. Please continue to level fund SMADC and protect this valuable resource for our state and family farms. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY


James Randy Guy, President

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Cc: Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary of Agriculture
David Brinkley, Secretary of Budget and Management
Senator Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate
Delegate Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House
Senator Guy Guzzonne, Chairman, Budget and Taxation Committee
Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chairman, Appropriations Committee
Senator Jack Bailey
Delegate Matthew Morgan
Delegate Gerald Clark
Delegate Brian Crosby
Commissioner Eric Colvin
Commissioner Michael Hewitt
Commissioner Todd Morgan
Commissioner John O'Connor
Dr. Rebecca Bridgett, County Administrator
David Weiskopf, County Attorney