



Maryland Farm Bureau Policy for 2019



*As Adopted by the Delegates at the 2018 Annual Meeting
December 2-4, 2018*

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1 **FOREWORD**

2 Farm Bureau, the voice of agriculture, is a free, independent, non-governmental
3 voluntary association of farm families and those with related interest.

4 Farm Bureau is local, statewide, national and international in its scope and influence. It is
5 non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character. It is organized to provide a means by
6 which farmers can work together toward the goals upon which they agree. It is wholly
7 controlled by its members and is financed by dues covering county, state and national
8 membership, paid annually by each member family.

9 Farm Bureau policies stem from our belief that agriculture in Maryland is a vital
10 endeavor necessary to maintain the viability of our state. Farm families discuss issues, talk them
11 over in the community and make recommendations. County resolutions derived from these
12 community recommendations were adopted as policies on county issues and as recommendations
13 on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies herein were derived
14 from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm Bureau policy for 2019
15 as set by voting delegates during the 103rd annual convention of the Maryland Farm Bureau on
16 December 4, 2018.

17 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

18 **Career Technology Education**

19 We support the career technology education program in Maryland. We recommend that
20 local boards of education, with state support, introduce an approved production agriculture
21 program in Maryland junior/senior or senior high schools. We strongly recommend that the
22 State board of education institute standards for agricultural education programs that include
23 teaching agriculture, Ag economics and general agri-business. '15

24 **Community Colleges**

25 We urge the introduction or expansion of agricultural programs in the community
26 colleges throughout the state. '07

27 **Curriculum**

28 We support an effective, systematic instructional program about agriculture in our public
29 schools. We believe the curriculum should include "Introduction to Agriculture Science"
30 starting in elementary school and continuing into middle school and high school to generate
31 awareness of the importance of agriculture to our society and to ensure future generations of
32 well-trained leaders for the agricultural industry. '15

33 We urge the public schools to implement a certified/accredited agricultural curriculum
34 program in at least one high school in each county and Baltimore City. '15

35 We support MAEF's efforts to partner with stakeholders, including county public school
36 systems, farmers, and allies, to expand agricultural education in the State of Maryland. '17

37 We commend the Maryland Commission on Education in Agriculture for its study and
38 report concerning the enhancement of agricultural education in the state. We support the
39 Commission's recommendations to improve and enhance education in agricultural programs
40 throughout Maryland, especially the improved agricultural curriculum in Grades K-12 and the
41 recommendations for new and upgraded facilities. We encourage the continued efforts of the
42 Governor to expand and improve agricultural curriculum in the Maryland public school system.
43 '07

44 We support increased funding for middle and high school agricultural education
45 programs. Funds should be used for program development and improvement, staff development,
46 curriculum including CASE (Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education) and extended
47 day/year employment. We strongly support Ag science teachers who provide student leadership
48 in FFA and supervised agricultural experience as components of the program. '17

49 We support the State of Maryland becoming an FFA affiliated State. '18

51 We oppose the expenditure of public funds to promote animal rights and the use of
52 educational materials in public schools that discourage the use of animal products. '06

53 **Environmental Requirements**

54 The public needs to be made aware of the importance of the preservation of agricultural
55 land for a totally healthy environment. We encourage more farm city festivals, including farm
56 tours and educational displays so the general public can have a better understanding of how food
57 is produced. '08

58 We recommend the new curriculum for the environmental requirement for graduation
59 should be reviewed by the MAEF Board and amended where necessary before being taught. '11

60 **Funding for MAEF**

61 We support the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation and its efforts to receive
62 legislative funding from the state special fund appropriations and funding through grant-in-aid
63 from the Maryland State Department of Education. '06

64 We support the Maryland Ag Tag and we believe that all fees derived from sales should
65 continue to be used to support MAEF. '08

66 **Teacher Training**

67 We recommend that training of teachers for Maryland public K-12 schools and colleges
68 include a mini-course in agriculture, and that state educational subdivisions include an in-service
69 day or days to instruct teachers and guidance counselors about agriculture and careers in
70 agriculture. '16

71
72 **AGRICULTURAL FAIRS**

73 We support state level legislation to grant an exemption to all county Agricultural Fairs
74 from the provisions of noise control regulations that establish ambient noise levels and
75 equipment performance standards. '10

76 We support state laws and regulations that encourage viable agricultural practices and
77 encourage farmers to operate in a manner that would avoid endangering the safety of the general
78 public. We support an increase in funds to the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board to be used to
79 encourage, through promotion and assistance, agricultural fairs, 4-H exhibits, FFA and other
80 qualifying agricultural events. '06

81 We oppose restrictions or bans on the types of animals that are shown at state, county and
82 community agricultural fairs, shows and exhibitions. '17

83
84 **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION**

85 We support the concept of agricultural land preservation and urge all landowners to
86 acquaint themselves with the programs available and the benefits derived thereof. Furthermore,
87 we urge the state and county governments to continue to support the voluntary preservation of
88 agricultural land with substantial increases in funding. We encourage them to work with all
89 interested stakeholders to develop innovative voluntary programs that maximize farmland
90 preservation while protecting landowner equity and private property rights and not negatively
91 impacting any other rights running with the land. '06

92 We strongly urge MALPF continue to be under the control and oversight of the Maryland
93 Secretary of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '15

94 We oppose taking productive agricultural land out of production for the purpose of
95 meeting requirements for forest conservation, buffers, and mitigation measures. The state should
96 conduct a survey to determine the loss of acreage of food producing land for these purposes.'11

97 We encourage neighboring counties to work cooperatively to achieve these goals
98 provided county sovereignty is respected and all planning and zoning decisions are made at the
99 county level. '16

100 We support the Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation and county preservation
101 boards in their efforts to preserve agricultural land throughout the state. Furthermore, we urge
102 that these boards maintain the right to select land eligible for easement sale with priority toward
103 creating large contiguous blocks of preserved land. '08

104 The decision to target priority farms should be left to the county's agland preservation
105 board under the current MALPF funding formula. '10

106 **Ag Preservation Funding**

107 We urge full funding by the state and counties for agland preservation programs,
108 including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program. Payments for
109 these programs should reflect current market values for farmland. '15

110 Farming that generates a profit should be an allowed use on agricultural land purchased
111 by the state, county or municipalities. '17

112 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '09

113 We support the creation of a \$20 million annual bond fund for at least 10 years for agland
114 preservation and the Rural Legacy programs. '12

115 We support permanent annual funding of MARBIDCO's Next Generation Farmland
116 Acquisition Program. '17

117 We oppose transfer and/or use of funds set aside for agricultural land preservation for
118 anything other than the preservation of farmland. '07

119 We oppose any attempt to cap all transfer tax funds used for agricultural land
120 preservation programs. '15

121 We support a line on state income tax returns to allow taxpayers to donate funds to the
122 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to preserve farmland. '07

123 We support an amendment of State Code Section 13-305 which removes the loophole for
124 developers paying the State Agricultural Transfer Taxes when farm properties are transferred,
125 developed or taken out of agricultural use designation. '18

126 Furthermore, we recommend that additional county and state incentives for participation
127 should be provided, such as property tax credits for agricultural district properties committed to a
128 term of five years or property tax credits on land where easements have been purchased, and the
129 enactment of a Maryland agricultural land property tax credit program as part of the contract. '09

130 **Appraisals**

131 We urge the state to use local appraisers who should base their appraisals on the recent
132 sale or transfer of property in the immediate vicinity. We also believe that the appraisers should
133 be required to successfully complete a course of study specifically on agricultural land appraisal
134 approved by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. Furthermore, appraisers
135 should be required to take into consideration the value of standing timber, the subdivision value
136 of any property, as well as the uniqueness of the metropolitan areas when making their
137 appraisals. '05

138 **Mapping**

139 We oppose the identification and inclusion of state and county Ag land preservation
140 easement properties in land use and public facilities maps. Where so included and identified,
141 such areas should be prominently labeled as private property. '06

142 **Maryland Agland Preservation Foundation**

143 In order for the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) to
144 operate more efficiently, we believe that the Maryland General Assembly should develop a
145 permanent annual allotment for the Agricultural Land Preservation Program. We also believe
146 the following changes should be made:

147 (1) The "Right to Farm" provisions provided in the sale of Maryland agricultural land easements
148 should be extended to anyone who is enrolled in an agricultural district. '07

- 149 (2) We direct MALPF to allow other forms of income when it does not interfere with the present
150 agriculture operation or change the agricultural capabilities of the land including expanded
151 permitted uses such as ag tourism and value-added operations. '11
- 152 (3) We support the right of value-added agricultural businesses on MALPF land to sell products
153 not produced or grown on the farm as a secondary attraction (.e.g. sandwiches, t-shirts, small
154 gifts). '07
- 155 (4) We recommend that farms be allowed into the MALPF program without regard to mineral
156 rights issues. '09
- 157 (5) We support the proposal to alter children's lots to allow the right to pass residual lots to a
158 new owner. '11
- 159 (6) We strongly urge MALPF to permit the onsite extraction of gas from farmland under
160 MALPF easement. '08

Other Methods to Preserve Agland

162 As another step toward preservation of agricultural land, we propose legislation to create
163 an Agricultural Land Condemnation Board, chaired by the State's Secretary of Agriculture.
164 Before anyone can condemn any productive agricultural lands for any purpose, the involved
165 body must appeal to the board. The board must determine that there is no reasonable or prudent
166 alternative. '05

167 We oppose the condemnation of prime and productive farmland for government
168 mandated mitigation projects without prior approval by the Agland Condemnation Board. '12

169 We support the establishment of a state level green payments program similar to the
170 federal Conservation Security Program. '06

Transfer Development Rights

172 We oppose the conveyance of Transferable Development Rights across county lines. '16

Zoning

174 We recommend that every county review their agricultural zoning and its impact on the
175 equity of landowners. '06

176 We support the preservation of agricultural land and equity through the process of
177 donating, purchasing and transferring development rights. However, state mandated down-
178 zoning is totally unacceptable. We support local zoning authority only. '08

179 We recommend that state required land use planning documents for Parks & Recreation
180 and Ag Preservation be prepared separately. '17

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

183 We encourage and support the passage of legislation to help resource-based industries
184 and alternative or value-added enterprises. We encourage the state to coordinate laws and
185 regulations with contiguous states. '10

186 On-farm value-added processing of agricultural products should be considered a part of
187 normal agricultural practices. '09

188 We support the right for Maryland farmers to make and process mulch and compost from
189 both on and off the farm sources. '14

190 We encourage MDA to work with state and county agencies to coordinate uniform
191 statewide rules concerning the marketing of locally produced meat, dairy and poultry products at
192 farmers' markets, roadside stands and farm commissaries in non-commercial agricultural
193 buildings. '04

194 We encourage the state to work with USDA to develop a process by which locally
195 produced and processed meat and poultry can be shipped within and across state lines for sale to
196 local restaurants. This may include the state investing in MDA meat inspectors to provide the
197 necessary oversight at custom butcher shops. '13

198 We support the development of regional or travelling meat processing facilities to
199 accommodate producers in all areas of the state and reduce the need to transport animals to out-
200 of-state processors. '13.

201 We support legislation and improvements in regulations that allow farm breweries more
202 opportunities for direct consumer sales. '11

203 We support agritainment as an acceptable use of agricultural land. '13

204 Agritourism should be defined as activities conducted on a farm and offered to the public
205 or to invited groups for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in the farm
206 operation.'14

207 We support wedding and event venues as an accessory use on a working farm '16

208 We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture. '17

209

210 **AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION**

211 We urge MDE to consider all agricultural water withdrawal permits in use before
212 increasing water withdrawal permits or approving new water withdrawal permits for
213 municipalities or subdivisions when these lands coincide. '07

214 We urge MDA, MDE and DNR to work with the U.S. Geological Survey in updating
215 computer models for Maryland's underground aquifers. '07

216 We oppose any fees for permits or any fees for agriculture water use in the state.'12

217 We oppose the mandatory use of flow meters on Ag Water appropriation usage permits.

218 '12

219 Under the State Water Application Law, MDE is the only agency that may restrict water
220 usage in Maryland. We believe MDE should continue to be the only authority in this area.
221 Local governments should not be allowed to regulate water usage. Agricultural water use should
222 continue to be exempt from usage control. '04

223 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture's right to use water for irrigation.

224 '04

225 We encourage MDE to streamline the agricultural water withdrawal permit process to
226 provide more timely approval. '08

227 Under MDE's water withdrawal permit, a farmer who uses less water than allocated for a
228 given month/year should not be penalized and should not receive a lower water allocation. '15

229 When a water appropriation permit hearing is requested by an interested party, MDE
230 should require the interested party to be in attendance during the hearing. If the requesting party
231 fails to appear, the hearing should be dismissed. '15

232 We request MDE use "irrigated inches per acre" rather than "gallons per day" when
233 formulating water appropriation permits. '15

234 Surface water screening devices should not be required on man-made irrigation ponds.

235 '14

236 We urge the state government to designate pond/river screening devices be eligible for
237 cost share. '18

238

239 **AIR QUALITY**

240 Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of
241 air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when
242 considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. '18

243 We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean air
244 (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in reducing
245 equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. '18

246 We support a healthy environment, including good air quality, but we are opposed to
247 emission control rules and standards for farm equipment that would require the retrofitting of our
248 equipment to meet those standards. '18

249 We oppose exhaust emissions from farm machinery along with dust and particulate
250 matter generated from agricultural activity being subject to the federal Clean Air standards
251 instituted in 1997. '18

252 We oppose regulations dealing with exhaust of ammonia or methane gases from
253 agricultural activities. '18

254 We recommend MDE allow the burning of agricultural use buildings. Buildings to be
255 burned should meet safety standards for burning set by county codes. Burning should be
256 supervised by the local fire company. '18

257 We encourage MDA to assemble an ag air quality expert panel with the mission to
258 review, vet and validate regional ag emissions research & publications to ensure pertinence to
259 real world conditions. This panel should consist, at minimum of the MD & DE state
260 climatologists, MD & DE extension animal science specialists and representatives from the dairy
261 and poultry associations. '18

262 We oppose the creation of a state carbon and/or Greenhouse Gas reduction tax/fee. '18

263 We Oppose requiring CAFO's to install air quality monitoring devices. '18

264 We support air quality monitoring data be managed by University of Maryland
265 Extension. '18

266

267 **ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES**

268 We recommend legislation be enacted that would require the assignment and prominent
269 display of an identifying number on all ATV's, dirt bikes, etc. '16

270 Furthermore, parents and guardians should be held responsible for damage caused by
271 ATV's ridden by their minor children. '04.

272 Landowners should not be held responsible for injury to riders or damage to ATV's when
273 operated on private lands. '14

274 We recognize the use of all-terrain vehicles as necessary agricultural vehicles in the day-
275 to-day business of agricultural operations. We support a farmer's ability to cross state and
276 county roads to get from one part of his/her farm to another. '04

277

278 **ALCOHOL PRODUCTION – ON FARM**

279 We support the recognition of vineyards & wineries, farm breweries and farm distilleries
280 – and their related activities – as agriculture. '15

281 We support the definition of winery to include vineyards, processing of grapes, wine
282 making, storage of wine, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of wine and related products,
283 food service, and other associated activities. '07

284 We support the definition of farm brewery to include agricultural products used for
285 brewing, processing of hops and grains, malting, fermentation, storage of beer, promotional
286 events, tasting rooms, sales of beer and related products, food service, and other associated
287 activities. '15

288 We support the definition of farm distillery to include agricultural products used for
289 distilling, processing of grains and fruit, fermentation and distillation, storage of distilled
290 products, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of distilled and related products, food service,
291 and other associated activities. '15

292 We support the recognition of wineries, farm breweries and farm distilleries as usage of
293 right in agricultural and rural conservation zones. '15

294 We support wineries', farm breweries' and farm distilleries' rights to market their
295 product as broadly and as widely as possible, including in "Farmer's Markets" listed by the
296 Department of Agriculture under annual permits issued by the Office of the Comptroller. '15
297 We support research and funding in cooperation with MDA and UMD that enhances the
298 viability of commercial viticulture, on farm brewing and distilling in Maryland. '15
299 We support brewers' right to supply spent grain to local farmers. '15
300 We support the inclusion of the inventory of grape, hop and brewery grain production in
301 the state in future MDA and NASS agricultural statistical surveys. '15
302

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS

304 We support research into cost-effective alternative uses for agricultural commodities
305 including value-added products that would increase demand, and thus, improve marketing
306 potential. '18

307 We support continuing research and development of alternate and renewable energy
308 resources. '18

309 We strongly urge the local, state and federal government agencies to support new
310 alternative Ag enterprises to provide assistance in market development; and, to provide
311 education so that new enterprises can become viable sources of income in agriculture. '18
312

ANIMAL CARE

314 We oppose any legislation that would interfere with the right of farmers to raise livestock
315 and poultry in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices. '18

316 We encourage farmers to be proactive by using voluntary quality and environmental
317 assurance programs. '18

318 We support properly researched and industry-tested poultry and livestock practices that
319 provide consumers with a wholesome food supply and enable farmers to improve the care and
320 management of their animals. '18

321 We oppose any legislation or regulation that would prohibit or unduly restrict the use of
322 animals in agricultural or medical research. '18

323 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in
324 educating the food industry, school children, the general public and those elected to represent us
325 in government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,
326 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated
327 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.
328 '18

329 We support the right of farmers to protect their livestock and poultry from predatory
330 animals. '18

331 We support the establishment of a Livestock Care Standards Board at MDA to review
332 and publish existing industry standards for livestock care and make recommendations to the
333 Secretary of Agriculture as needed. '18

334 We recommend that a farm operation suspected of animal cruelty be inspected by a
335 University animal science specialist or licensed veterinarian to determine whether a cruelty
336 situation exists before charges are filed or animals removed from the site. '18

337 We oppose animal rights activism that disrupts farming operations, Ag related activities
338 on and off the farm, fairs, racetracks, livestock sales or research facilities. '18

Antibiotic Feed Additives

340 Antibiotic feed additives found safe and effective by the Food and Drug Administration
341 should not be restricted. '18

342 We support continued research to provide a definitive answer to the question of the use of
343 antibiotics in agribusiness and to the health of the public. '18

344 We oppose mandatory reporting of on-farm antibiotic usage data. '18

345

346 **ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES**

347 We recommend the Maryland Department of Agriculture update, remodel and maintain
348 regional animal health laboratories. '08

349 We urge Maryland Department of Agriculture to fund and fill the un-staffed positions
350 without delay.'10

351 A strong animal health program needs to be supported by the state. We support full
352 accreditation of Maryland's Animal Health Labs at Salisbury and Frederick. With bio-security
353 and agri-terrorism concerns and to support the well-being of Maryland's livestock industries, it is
354 crucial that the laboratory services are upgraded for rapid and accurate disease diagnosis. '09

355

356

356 **AQUACULTURE**

357 Aquaculture is a branch of agriculture and all applicable regulations shall be a function of
358 MDA. DNR, as a regulatory agency, shall be removed from control of all aquaculture products
359 and production regardless of location. All current DNR laws and regulations affecting
360 aquaculture shall be referred to MDA for modification and implementation as agricultural laws
361 and regulations. Restrictions and policies implemented by DNR relating to the management of
362 wild aquatic resources shall not infringe in any manner on aquaculture activities. '15

363 We support the Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council's recommendations that
364 provide science-based guidance on how aquaculture should be managed '16

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366 **AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD**

367 We recognize that Blue Crabs in the Chesapeake Bay are a highly valuable resource for
368 both commercial and recreational activities. Regulations controlling this fishery should be
369 managed through modern data collection and sound science, with input from all stakeholders as
370 well as the Bi-State Blue Crab Technical Committee and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. '06

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372

372 **BEEKEEPING**

373 Managed bee populations have been dwindling as the result of mite infestations, weather
374 conditions and other unknown factors. Funding should be provided and enhanced for additional
375 research and staffing to assist beekeepers and others in overcoming these challenges, to ensure
376 adequate managed bee populations in the future. '11

377 There should be no laws or regulations that prevent or discourage the keeping of
378 honeybees and other pollinators in an area unless it is determined that the beekeeper is not using
379 best management practices. '08

380 We support the planting of pollinator habitat as long as the habitat is not a noxious or
381 invasive species of plants '15

382

383

383 **BROWNFIELDS**

384 We support incentives and liability protections to encourage new enterprises to utilize
385 former industrial sites as a means of reducing sprawl. '07

386 We support incentives to encourage the redevelopment of former residential and
387 commercial properties as a means of reducing sprawl. '03

388

389

389 **CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP**

390 We oppose regulations that put farmers who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed at a
391 competitive disadvantage. States within the Bay Watershed should act as a cohesive unit when
392 implementing regulations or practices in order to avoid creating a competitive disadvantage to
393 one or more states. '13

394 We fully support federal programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program at
395 USDA that reward and encourage farmers to install conservation practices. '09

396 We recommend that industry, urban run-off, wastewater treatment plants, etc. be given
397 the same time limit as agriculture to reduce the impact of nutrient loading on the Chesapeake
398 Bay. Emphasis should be placed on municipal, urban and industrial areas regarding water
399 quality, nutrient management and solid waste disposal.'10

400 We urge the state to remove the sediment and nutrients trapped behind the Conowingo
401 Dam as a priority in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. '13

402 All non-compliant discharges and spills from waste water treatment plants should be
403 reported immediately and be made readily available to the public. This information should be
404 posted in a cumulative manner and should be on a per watershed basis. '11

405 The entire Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries should be considered a no discharge zone
406 in reference to marine vessels. '15

407 We recognize the Chesapeake Bay as a valuable natural resource. We support efforts to
408 restore the health of the Bay and we encourage farmers to utilize Best Management Practices in
409 their agricultural operations. '07

410 We urge continued and increased funding for research and implementation of BMPs on
411 farms, including nutrient management plans and the construction of ponds, waterways and buffer
412 strips to reduce run-off and ground water contamination.'12

413 We recommend that cost share programs be evaluated and revised as necessary to ensure
414 equity for participants. '07

415 We urge the UMD, MDA and MDE to jointly develop and utilize thorough, accurate and
416 current information for describing the condition of the natural resource base in Maryland and the
417 contribution of the agricultural industry in protecting and enhancing that base. '09

418 We recommend that greater attention and research be given to what is happening in the
419 water column of the Bay itself. The filter feeders and small aquatic life will have to be a part of
420 the long-term solution for the Bay cleanup. Harvesting moratoriums, restrictions on harvesting
421 methods, and other measures should be considered. '16

422 State funding should be dramatically increased for revival of oysters, targeting surface
423 raised oysters and other filter feeders. '14

424 We support the allowance of tax credits to be sold through a broker system based on the
425 current income tax subtraction modification for the purchasing of conservation equipment '15

426 **Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up**

427 We support a dedicated fund for conservation programs that financially assists farmers
428 and other non-point source contributors who implement practices to improve the water quality of
429 the Chesapeake Bay. '07

430 All dedicated funds for Chesapeake Bay clean-up should be restricted solely to improve
431 the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. '10

432 We support maintaining the cover crop portion of the Bay Restoration Fund at no less
433 than 40% of all funds collected from septic users. '11

434 **Storm water Management Regulations and Fees**

435 We believe the storm water management fee (rain tax) that has been assessed in many
436 counties is too high on farmland. Farmers are already taking steps to address the agricultural
437 goals in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup plan (TMDL WIP). Farmers are spending money to install
438 Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent soil erosion, run off and nutrient movement.
439 Farmers should not also have to pay to address urban storm water control measures. '13

440 We also oppose the expansion to other counties of the existing storm water utility
441 fees.'13

442 Agricultural structures and supporting grounds should not be held to the same storm
443 water management standards as commercial buildings. '11

444 The construction of all new agricultural structures should be exempt from having a storm
445 water management plan. '12

446 **TMDL & Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)**

447 The proposed Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and the Total Maximum
448 Daily Load (TMDL) for the Bay and its tributaries will place an unfair economic disadvantage
449 on farms in the Bay watershed as compared to farms elsewhere. As the percentage of nutrient
450 load from urban areas continues to increase, it would be inequitable for agriculture to be
451 burdened with excessive offsets and trading. We ask that cost vs. benefit be carefully considered
452 in all debate on environmental policies. No programs should be implemented without a financial
453 impact study being done. Government should direct actions that are the best that can be achieved
454 within reasonable limits to reduce impacts to the Bay.'11

455 We urge funding for all cost-share programs for farmers to implement the TMDL and
456 funding for staff and technical support for the UMD Extension and the Soil Conservation
457 Districts. '10

458 MDA should place a moratorium on new agricultural regulations until the 2017
459 recalibration of the Bay Model is completed and verified as accurate. '13

460 As the TMDL WIP is implemented, private property rights should be protected. State
461 and local governments should be precluded from attaining goals by mandating agricultural land
462 retirement through the use of eminent domain or regulation. '13

463 If the implementation of environmental regulations results in the removal of agricultural
464 land from production or the installation of conservation practices, then the farmer should be
465 compensated for the land and maintenance of the practices. '18

466

467 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

468 **Farmers' Markets**

469 We strongly encourage the continuance of all farmers' markets. '07

470 We support legislation that will promote farmers' markets by creating a central registry
471 of Maryland farmers' markets, to include roadside stands, agricultural product sales locations, or
472 other locations that advertise, promote, or use the term "farmers' market." '17

473 We encourage legislation that will limit legal liability to registered farmers' market
474 operators. '17

475 **Grain Dealers**

476 We recommend that all grain dealers in the state of Maryland should have certified grain-
477 testing personnel. We request that samples taken for moisture tests be free and clear of foreign
478 materials. We support the voluntary establishment of standards for moisture discounts, which
479 separate shrinkage, and the drying cost and which are not tied to the price paid for the grain. '14

480 **Labeling Requirements**

481 Since the risk of illness from unpasteurized cider is no greater than the risk of illness
482 from any other food source, we do not support any labeling of cider beyond whether or not it is
483 pasteurized. '07

484 We strongly support truth in labeling of food and food products. '17

485 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

486 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise. We
487 urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's efforts to
488 improve marketing services. We support the "Maryland's Best" marketing program.'12

489 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that
490 serve all citizens.'07

491 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Economic Development to continue
492 its policy of providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural industries.'06

493 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of
494 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities. '13

495 We support state grants and financial support for local co-ops, marketing and food
496 processing facilities. '18

497 **Deep Water Terminal**

498 We support a viable grain export terminal.'07

499 The State of Maryland must work diligently to develop a competitive grain trade deep
500 water terminal, which is critical for the survival of grain producers. '07

501 **Roadside Markets**

502 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural
503 products.'06

504 We encourage the enforcement of existing county zoning laws related to farmers'
505 markets and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer merchants
506 and/or non-local merchants. '10

507 **Roadside Signs**

508 Due to the need for the farmers to diversify their operations the use of roadside signs is
509 imperative to let the public know your location and which products are available. Therefore, we
510 support exempting such signs from the regulations governing roadside signs. '06

511 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

512 We oppose any segment of the farm community promoting their production methods as
513 healthier or better for the environment without evidence to support those claims.'12

514 **Value Added**

515 We support the development of a statewide value-added processing system. '09

516

517

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

518 **Best Management Practices**

519 The process of obtaining a permit from the appropriate government agencies to do any
520 type of work in or along the small streams that flow through our farmland has become extremely
521 burdensome and time consuming. We urge these government agencies to approve general
522 permits to install approved best management practices. '17

523 We encourage agricultural landowners and tenant operators to study, develop and
524 implement long-term programs or lease arrangements with conservation practice systems,
525 including nutrient management plans that will achieve the desired water quality benefits. '17

526 Interpretation and definition of Best Management Practices (BMPs) must recognize the
527 economic impact and cost to the farmer. '17

528 If accepted best management practices are implemented in good faith and later
529 determined to have a negative impact on the environment or natural resources, the landowner
530 should not be held legally or financially responsible. '17

531 Farmers and landowners shall be allowed to install culverts in non-blue line ditches to
532 increase the accessibility of their land. '17

533 **Conservation Practices**

534 We support the reclassification of Class 3 trout streams, which contain no native trout to
535 Class 4 streams. '17

536 Any contract poultry grower in Maryland, regardless of capacity, should be eligible for
537 cost share funds for both manure sheds and composters. '17

538 We support landowner wildlife plantings, but encourage the restriction of tree and shrub
539 plantings within 25 feet of any right-of-way in order to reduce the cost of trimming at taxpayer
540 expense and to enhance public safety. '17

541 We strongly oppose any effort to classify conservation enhancements on private land as
542 public domain for recreation or hunting purposes. '17

543 We urge the state to assure that adequate funds be available to provide sufficient cost
544 sharing of approved soil conservation practices. We also urge the state to provide an adequate
545 number of trained personnel in local Soil Conservation District to assist farmers and property
546 owners in the development and implementation of their conservation plans, making sure the
547 plans not only provide the needed environmental protection but are practical and economical as
548 well. '17

549 We oppose any effort to replace technical expertise within the Natural Resources
550 Conservation Service or Soil Conservation Districts with non-governmental organization (NGO)
551 personnel. '18

552 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

553 We strongly recommend that public agencies should not be eligible for funding under the
554 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). '17

555 We believe that programs that offer incentives for conservation, wildlife habitat creation
556 and preservation should minimize the loss of prime farmland while maintaining our natural
557 resources. '17

558 We propose changes to the CREP that are intended to keep prime land available for
559 production, reduce the economic incentive to take whole farms or major portions thereof out of
560 production, to remove the government as a primary cash rent competitor for valuable agricultural
561 land and to provide for more effective maintenance of land under CREP contract. '17

562 Our proposed changes include the following:

- 563 (1) CREP contracts should be issued only on land that has a scientifically supported impact on
564 water quality. CREP should not be used to create wildlife habitat where water quality
565 benefit is negligible. '17
- 566 (2) Buffers should be variable, with a maximum width of 100 feet, based on topographical
567 and soil conditions to ensure water quality benefits and minimize loss of productive
568 cropland. '17
- 569 (3) Buffers established adjacent to ditches should have a maximum width of 50 feet and
570 should be smaller if prime and productive soils are impacted. Buffers should not include
571 trees within 35 feet of a ditch in order to facilitate maintenance of the ditch. The practice
572 of digging ditches just to enroll the entire acreage on farms should be prohibited. '17
- 573 (4) Regulations should be developed to require weed control on all land subject to a CREP
574 contract. The maintenance and control rules should be enforced. '17
- 575 (5) Mowing of CREP lands should be required annually if weeds cannot be controlled by
576 other means. Weeds of primary concern to adjacent farmers include, but are not limited
577 to: giant ragweed, multiflora rose, burr cucumber, phragmites, autumn olive, mile-a-
578 minute, and kudzu, scrub trees and noxious grasses. '17
- 579 (6) Rental rates for future CREP contracts should be adjusted to provide for a sliding-scale
580 that pays more for land immediately adjacent to water and less for land closer to prime
581 and productive soils. Rates should be in line with local rental rates. '17

582 We urge federal, state and local agencies to conduct field inspections on CREP contracts
583 that include noxious weed compliance. If landowners are not in compliance with the contract,
584 agencies should work with landowners to gain compliance. '17

585 USDA landlord/tenant rules should be strictly enforced to prevent losses to farmers who
586 have already invested resources into land being considered for a CREP contract. '17

587 Upon re-enrollment of land under a CREP contract, a farm should not be required to
588 destroy existing vegetation and replant as long as the existing CREP land has been properly
589 maintained and will meet the water quality and erosion control goals of the program. '17

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COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

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Cover Crop Program

The cover crop program administered by MDA should remain a voluntary cost-share program and should be amended as follows:

- (1) It should be made permanent. '07
- (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs '10
- (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '17
- (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
- (5) Farmers should receive the same cover crop payment for manure incorporated land that they would be paid for no till land, due to new manure incorporation requirements. '13
- (6) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain crops and hay acreage. '07
- (6) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain crops and hay acreage. '07
- (7) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
- (8) It should allow flexible planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '13
- (9) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast seeding. '07
- (10) Aerial seeding should be funded as all other methods of seeding and should not exclude double crop acres. '14
- (11) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it on the farm. '18
- (12) The annual signup date for the program should be from June 1st through September 1st. '12
- (13) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09
- (14) Fields should be allowed to contain blends of different cover crops as long as a nitrogen scavenger crop is included in the blends. This should include the addition of legumes to such blends. '12
- (15) Change seeding rates mandated for the cereal species that currently exist to be in accordance with current University of Maryland Extension research findings. '12
- (16) Give the option to adjust seeding rates and planting methods to facilitate late season termination, green planting, intercropping or relay cropping as an alternative to cover crop burndown. '16
- (17) Seeding rate should be calculated using germination rate and size of seed to achieve a number of viable seeds per acre. '17

We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program. '10

Maryland farmers and/or Ag organizations should have input on cover crop program and rate changes before those changes are implemented. '14

Cost Share Programs

Cost share programs need to expand to include small animal unit operations. '14

We recommend the flat rates and components of a practice be reviewed and revised annually with agricultural input to reflect current cost. '14

Maryland farmers/agricultural organizations should have input into state cost share program changes before those changes are implemented. '14

We recommend that NRCS, Soil Conservation District and Maryland Department of Agriculture resources be increased, and/or the approval process be streamlined to reduce a backlog of cost share applications. '16

640 We recommend that the State fund the MACS program with General Obligation Bonds.
641 '17

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643

CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

644 We recommend that the membership of the Critical Areas Commission be comprised of
645 at least 50% farmers who own property within 1,000 feet of the critical area.'07

646 Due to the impact on the agricultural community, we urge county governments to work
647 with their county Farm Bureaus when they develop their local programs. '07

648 We are opposed to the inclusion of upstream tributaries and non-tidal water into the
649 Critical Areas Program.'07

650 We support legislation that would require the state to compensate, at the fair market
651 value, Maryland property owners who are monetarily affected by the Critical Area Legislation
652 and/or the Endangered Species Act. '08

653 The inability to harvest timber in the critical areas is creating an inequitable financial loss
654 for the landowner. We recommend that the landowner be compensated for this loss.'07

655 We are concerned about exemptions granted within the Critical Area for marinas and
656 other recreational water related activities. '08

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CROP PROTECTION

659 We urge keeping all federally labeled crop protection products legal in the state, counties
660 and municipalities. '18

661 We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them by
662 approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '08

663 In order to help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to
664 maintain a biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old
665 chemicals, chemical containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '07

666 We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned
667 chemicals.'06

668 Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water contaminated
669 by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to label
670 instructions. '06

671 Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not
672 on emotional issues. '08

673 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The
674 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an
675 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to
676 farm his property. '07

677 We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to
678 aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '08

679 We oppose the collection and distribution of pesticide use data beyond that collected in
680 the USDA NASS survey.'13

681 We oppose the establishment of a pesticide use data reporting system that would make
682 information available to the general public or to "interested" researchers. '13

Disease Prevention & Pest Control

684 We support the monitoring of plant diseases such as Asian Soybean Rust in the exotic
685 plants used by homeowners and landscapers that may include invasive weed species that serve as
686 alternate hosts. We urge MDA to study these plant species and bolster its efforts to assure that all
687 new plants have no negative impact on farm crops or nursery stock.'07

688 We support existing restrictions on the movement of Ash trees to prevent the spread of
689 the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. '07

690 We support funding for joint research by universities to study and eliminate the Brown
691 Marmorated Stink Bug. '10

692 **Environmental Surcharge**

693 We are opposed to any state tax or surcharge on fertilizers and crop protectants to fund
694 environmental programs.'06

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696 **DAIRY INDUSTRY**

697 We strongly support the combined efforts of Maryland Farm Bureau with the MD Dairy
698 Industry Association and the Dairy Industry Advisory Council to develop a program that will
699 enhance the transparency of the pricing of milk to producers, raise milk prices, and increase the
700 stability and viability of the dairy industry in Maryland. '17

701 We urge the state to fund the Maryland Dairy Farmer Emergency Trust fund with a
702 minimum of \$5 million per year. '17

703 We support the Maryland Dairy Industry Association and urge farmers to join. '17

704 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to staff at least one full-time dairy
705 specialist. '17

706 **Milk Marketing**

707 Maintaining consumer confidence in dairy products is critical to the viability of the dairy
708 industry. Dairy product labeling should be truthful, accurate and be able to be substantiated. '17

709 Milk is a liquid produced by the mammary glands of mammals, and only products
710 meeting this definition should be permitted to be labeled, advertised and sold in Maryland as
711 milk '17

712 All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as "raw milk" only. '17

713 We believe schools should not provide milk to students after the sell-by date. '17

714 We support placing milk vending machines in all schools. '17

715 We urge Maryland Public Schools to remove skim milk for the food options and replace
716 with no less than 2% milk. '18

717 We urge Maryland Public Schools to add a minimum of 1% flavored milk to the food
718 options. '18

719

720 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

721 We oppose new or increased fees for dairy farmers, haulers and cooperatives. '17

722 We support current Maryland Law for the prohibition of raw milk sales. We support
723 legislation that would prohibit the use of cattle-share or farm-share agreements as a means to
724 circumvent existing raw milk sales laws. '17

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726 **DREDGE SPOIL**

727 We support the dredging of Baltimore Harbor, which would improve ship traffic and
728 benefit the state's economy.'07

729 When deposit sites are needed, dredge spoil shall be used to replenish low areas that were
730 once highland that are now wet or have eroded away. '05

731 We oppose dumping of dredge spoils into open water. '14

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733 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

734 We support a voluntary conservation habitat reserve program that would provide
735 incentives for landowners to establish and maintain habitat for endangered species.'05

736 Compensation shall be provided for landowners where use of the land is restricted by the
737 Endangered Species Act.'07

738 We urge the state to eliminate from the list those species (threatened or endangered) that
739 might have limited numbers in Maryland but are common elsewhere.'06

740 Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal
741 law. '07
742 Any plant or animal that is taken as a result of an agricultural practice shall be considered
743 an incidental taking. '07
744 We support the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reassess and possibly
745 remove the Delmarva Fox Squirrel from the endangered species list. '12
746

747 **ENERGY POLICY**

748 We strongly support a comprehensive, long-term energy policy that fully utilizes
749 domestic energy resources and aggressively promotes the role of agriculture. '13

750 We support an increase in off-shore and land-based drilling for oil and natural gas to
751 enhance supplies, lower prices and reduce dependence on foreign sources. '05

752 We strongly support the development of shale gas in Maryland. '15

753 **Ethanol & Bio-Diesel Fuel**

754 We support an energy independence and efficiency policy to include: (1) site approval,
755 environmental issues, funding and approval of renewable energy sources; (2) the use of
756 renewable fuels in county, state and federal automobile fleets; (3) support for the construction of
757 ethanol and biofuels plants in Maryland; and (4) support for production and use incentives for
758 ethanol and biodiesel. '07

759 We urge the use of some ethanol in gasoline and soy diesel in diesel fuel. '05

760 We urge research and education on the use of ethanol in all engines at 10 percent and
761 higher blends to ensure we meet the Renewable Fuel Standard goal of 36 billion gallons of
762 renewable fuel use by 2025. '09

763 We urge new research to improve ethanol compatibility with farm equipment. '10

764 We urge that all state and county government vehicles (including school buses) be
765 required to use bio diesel or ethanol fuels. '05

766 We encourage the maritime industries to use bio-diesel fuel on the Chesapeake Bay and
767 in other Maryland waterways. '07

768 We strongly believe that public officials need to seriously consider the opportunities and
769 potential for increasing local or domestic demand of commodities through the production of
770 Ethanol E-85. '07

771 We recommend that the Maryland Department of Transportation make changes to
772 guidelines so that current E85 (85% blend gasoline/ethanol) models may be used in fleets to
773 meet alternative fuel mandates. '07

774 We urge the support of government agencies such as the Department of Business &
775 Economic Development (DBED) in the development of bio-fuels in Maryland. '14

776 **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

777 We encourage research, development and utilization of alternative energy sources from
778 methane, biomass, wind, nuclear, solar, hydrogen, hydro and clean natural gas. '08

779 Additionally, we urge that this process be aided by appropriate government tax
780 incentives. '07

781 We support energy generation from poultry litter and livestock manure to be considered
782 value-added production on a farm. '15

783 We support the use of on-farm wind and solar energy production to provide electric
784 energy for the farm and to be sold to the energy grid. We encourage state and county
785 governments to provide regulatory support and encouragement for wind generators and turbines
786 to help offset farm energy costs. '16

787 We oppose commercial solar energy facilities being considered as an agricultural activity
788 and receiving the same exemptions as an agricultural structure or agland. This would also
789 include receiving the agricultural tax assessment. '16

790 We oppose the use of “farm” when referring to an alternative energy generation facility.

791 ’14

792 We oppose the State of Maryland preemption of local and county land use policy for
793 renewable energy generation projects. ’15

794 We support removing large scale commercial solar energy generating facilities from the
795 RPS carve-out for solar energy. ’16

796 We do not support commercial solar energy facilities being built on prime and productive
797 farmland. ’16

798 Commercial energy facilities should have appropriate riparian buffer and setback
799 requirements. ’16

800 **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

801 Outdoor wood fired boilers/furnaces that utilize approved emission control systems and
802 EPA best burn practices for Hydronic heaters should be allowed. ’08

803 **Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS)**

804 We support an additional carve-out in the Maryland RPS for poultry litter and livestock
805 manure to energy generation ’15

806 We oppose any % increase to the RPS if it causes an increase to the electric rates of the
807 consumer. ’15

808 We oppose any additional increases to the solar carve out in the RPS unless projects are
809 two megawatts or smaller. ’18

810

811 **ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING**

812 We urge changes to “standing law” so that no farmer who is in compliance with
813 applicable law could be sued by a third party. ’12

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815 **EQUINE INDUSTRY**

816 We support the inclusion of inventories of the various classes of equine in the state in
817 future MDA and NASS agriculture statistical surveys. ’18

818 We support the recognition of equine as part of the agricultural industry and not as
819 companion animals. Riding lessons, boarding or training given on a farm, and pleasure horses
820 should be considered a part of the normal agriculture practices. We support measures to improve
821 the Maryland Bred Program within the Thoroughbred and Standardbred Industry. ’18

822 We support the creation of state debt to fund the Maryland Horse Park.

823 We support the creation of incentives to horse owners to work with the Ag agencies that
824 offer technical assistance for implementing conservation and best management practices. ’18

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826 **FAMILY VALUES**

827 We recommend that the Maryland legislature and the Governor should: (1) Pass
828 legislation to make parents fully accountable for the destructive action of their children under the
829 age of 18; and (2) Have the party involved fully monetarily liable for the destructive action they
830 cause. If they are financially unable to pay, they should do so through community service. The
831 monetary amount should be determined and paid in full. ’15

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833 **FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES**

834 We recommend that the State FSA Administration grant more power to the county
835 committees to adequately staff county offices. ’07

836 We recommend more farmer input on FSA office closures before any implementation
837 occurs. ’05

838 We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and
839 consolidation of offices and services. ’14

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FOREST CONSERVATION

The Forest Conservation Act of 1991 has far reaching language, including reforestation lands cleared for development and afforestation, which means planting trees where no trees have existed for many years. We urge amending the Forest Conservation act to remove the afforestation section completely. We urge state government to recognize the difference between rural low-density development and urban high-density development in relation to tree conservation. The percentage of reforestation needs to be based on actual forest that is destroyed, rather than the present threshold percentage of parcels. '06

We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with regards to the harvesting of trees. '06

Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural lands under the state of Maryland's conservation or land use programs. '08

We recognize the need for funding for research of the Emerald Ash Borer to create potential options to contain, eliminate and determine if it will affect any other species of trees. '15

GAMBLING

We support that a portion of gaming proceeds continue to be utilized to supplement the purse and bred fund accounts. We support licensed video gaming and gambling at racetracks and/or other facilities and that a minimum of 25% of the total net revenue from these sources be used to supplement the purse and Maryland Bred Fund accounts to equal the average dollar value of the three highest states in the Purse and Breeding bonus accounts. Any expansion into other forms of gambling such as table games and sports book similar to Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) should benefit the equine industry and agricultural education programs. '15

We urge the state legislature to designate a portion of the education funds generated from the VLT's to Ag Education programs and be administered by MAEF. '15

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

We support the production and use of GMO products. We encourage the education of government officials and the public on the product safety, economic benefits and environmental benefits of GMOs. '07

We oppose legislation that would restrict the use of GMO commodities grown in the state. '12

We Support GMO policy decisions only at the federal government level and not at the state government level '15

We oppose state mandated labeling of products made with GMO crops. '15

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS – STATE GOVERNMENT

Elected Officials

We support a constitutional change to elect one senator per county. '16

We support a House of Delegates apportioned on population with a minimum of one delegate per county. '07

We oppose any method of selection for Clerks of the Court, Register of Wills, and Judges of the Orphans Court, other than election by the people. '07

We urge local control in the selections of those responsible for operating our local court systems. '07

Ethics

We support a change in current State law to allow farmers to become eligible for employment by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '06

890 **Government Spending**

891 We urge the reduction of government agency bureaucracy and duplication in an effort to
892 reduce costs, fees and frustration of the general public. '04

893 We urge all levels of government to operate within a balanced budget.'07

894 **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

895 We strongly oppose consolidation or transfer of any of MDA's current programs,
896 functions or authorities to any other department. We strongly support the transfer of any and all
897 ag-related programs, functions and authorities from other departments to MDA. '09

898 We urge the MDA to establish official standardized office hours for all department
899 offices including field offices. '09

900 **Regulatory Reform**

901 We request that any new policy or regulation proposed affecting land management,
902 nutrient management, environmental programs or enforcement be required to include an
903 economic impact study to evaluate the effect on vested persons. This shall be performed as part
904 of the developmental process for each regulation and policy. '13

905 We request that the farm community continue to be consulted and be allowed to
906 participate in the formulation of regulations and laws at all levels of government particularly
907 when they impact the Ag community. '05

908 Agencies developing regulations should have a thorough knowledge of all related aspects
909 of agriculture, not just their immediate subject matter, or they should seek additional input from
910 agriculture in the development of regulations. '05

911 We urge all government agencies develop regulations in cooperation with other agencies
912 so that there is a reduction in duplication and a consistency of purpose. '05

913 We ask for removal of the question on Maryland's death certificate in bold print, "Did
914 tobacco use contribute to the cause of death, YES { } NO { } UNCERTAIN { }?" '15

915 Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said
916 regulations. '13

917 We recommend that all State agencies review their rules and regulations that affect the
918 agriculture industry and modify and/or eliminate those that are outdated or serve no purpose. '05

919 Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and
920 scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry
921 industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All
922 regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis. '07

923 The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR)
924 Committee should have the authority to prevent a proposed regulation from being implemented.
925 The Committee should be able to refer controversial proposals to the full General Assembly for a
926 vote or for amendment before an agency can implement the proposed regulation. '08

927 **State and Local Agencies**

928 We support the co-location of Ag agencies, Ag education and resources in regional Ag
929 centers when feasible. '07

930 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '08

931 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
932 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the Maryland
933 National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict the
934 access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on private
935 property to no greater than is allowed to law enforcement agencies.'12

936 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
937 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
938 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate

939 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
940 practices. '08

941 **State Owned Farmland**

942 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
943 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
944 converted to conservation uses. '08

945 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

946 In light of the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension program
947 to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the present state
948 pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '11

949

950 **GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

951 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We
952 recognize the value of urban greenways, but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural
953 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with
954 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or rails
955 to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that adjoins
956 the proposed greenway before a study commences. '07

957 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any
958 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the
959 opportunity for input. Also, the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail
960 use on the safety, health, security, privacy and economic interests of the adjacent landowners and
961 determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail
962 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,
963 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use of
964 the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for
965 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers. '10

966

967 **GYPSY MOTH CONTROL**

968 We recommend that the state gypsy moth control program be maintained at a 250 egg
969 masses per acre baseline. '18

970

971

INSURANCE

972 **Crop Insurance**

973 We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a
974 tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. '07

975 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

976 Health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-employed
977 individuals. '13

978 We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated health
979 insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits in an attempt to better manage health
980 insurance costs. '05

981 We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge
982 the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of
983 quality health care. '13

984 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent
985 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users. '06

986 We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits to
987 long-term care insurance. '10

988 **Insurance Rates**

989 We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates
990 throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on
991 experience ratings. '05

992 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry as a result
993 of claims that are considered "Act of God" incidents. '16

994
995 **JOHNE'S DISEASE**

996 We acknowledge that the Maryland Department of Agriculture has made progress with
997 the John's program and request continued support for it. '05

998
999 **LABOR STANDARDS**

1000 We oppose overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. '14

1001 We support maximum opportunities for youth to work on farms. We believe youth gain
1002 important life skills, learn safety around animals and equipment, benefit from involvement in
1003 programs like 4-H and FFA, become interested in careers in agriculture, better understand that
1004 farmers are professionals and use best management practices, and establish a strong work ethic.
1005 Therefore, we urge government not to limit these opportunities. '12

1006
1007 **LAND STEWARDSHIP**

1008 Realizing that stewardship of the earth is in the public interest, we support the recognition
1009 of agriculture as a proper and environmentally sound use of our land resources. '06

1010
1011 **LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING**

1012 **Annexation**

1013 Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations
1014 within the county. '05

1015 **Growth Management**

1016 We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations
1017 within our state. '11

1018 We oppose any state policy that overrides county planning and zoning authority. '12

1019 We oppose the premise of Plan Maryland and urge the state to slow down the process for
1020 considering it to give counties and citizens time to thoroughly review the plan. Any benchmarks
1021 and/or consequences established must be clearly defined and the final plan should be subject to
1022 approval by the General Assembly prior to implementation. '11

1023 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.
1024 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural
1025 counties. '08

1026 We believe no program (or parts of a program) should be adopted until we review and
1027 evaluate the accumulative impact of all of our present programs. We need to know the inter-
1028 relationship of all the legislation and regulations dealing with growth management such as the
1029 Chesapeake Bay critical area law; the Nontidal Wetland Protection Act; federal, state, and local
1030 resource protection programs; the agricultural land preservation program; Program Open Space;
1031 and the reforestation law passed by the General Assembly. '05

1032 We support a requirement for local governments to consider the impact of new
1033 development on water resources and current users. Development should not be allowed to
1034 surpass the level of water resources. '07

1035 Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's
1036 property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '06

1037 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).

1038 '10

1039 **Permitting**

1040 We support the continued exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building
1041 permits and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the zoning code. We further support
1042 the inclusion of specific language in the building code to permit public access to existing,
1043 structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated upgrades to the full current codes.

1044 '05

1045 **Reverse Set-backs & Buffers**

1046 We urge elected officials and county planners to require protective measures for
1047 farmland, such as reverse setbacks, buffers, fencing, etc. for new non-agricultural uses occurring
1048 adjacent to existing agricultural operations. '14

1049 **Zoning**

1050 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their efforts
1051 to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners involved
1052 should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria changes.
1053 Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall provide for just
1054 compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no down zoning on agriculture land.

1055 '07

1056 Zoning regulations should be determined at the local, not state level. '08

1057 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '08

1058 Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or
1059 default. '08

1060

1061

LAW ENFORCEMENT

1062 **Penalties & Confinement**

1063 We urge the state to increase penalties for defacing and removal of "Mason-Dixon Line"
1064 markers. '05

1065 We favor adequate prison facilities so that inmates can serve their sentences. We
1066 recommend that inmates in minimum security penal complexes be required to work on
1067 highways, prison farms or other public projects to help defray the cost of their food and support
1068 and to pay restitution to their victims. We also favor emphasis on the rehabilitation of persons
1069 confined to penal institutions to afford them a better opportunity to assume a constructive role in
1070 society. '06

1071 We believe that the State of Maryland should enact legislation providing for a mandatory
1072 life sentence without parole, or a death sentence, for violent murder offenses and murder
1073 offenses occurring during the illegal transportation and/or distribution of controlled dangerous
1074 substances (drugs). '05

1075 We urge the Department of Corrections to return prisoners to their county of origin after
1076 the completion of their sentence before their release. '07

1077 We support legislation that would prevent elected officials from holding office if
1078 convicted of a crime or of misconduct in office and from receiving pensions or benefits
1079 pertaining to the office that they held. '06

1080 **Judicial Process**

1081 We recommend that the defendants be brought to a speedy trial and if convicted, given a
1082 sentence sufficient to discourage further crimes. We support consistency in judicial sentencing
1083 for all. '07

1084 We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity
1085 defense of "innocent by reason of insanity" to "guilty, but insane." '05

1086 **Investigation of Crimes**

1087 We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between
1088 jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. '07

1089 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who
1090 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.'06

1091 To deter copper thefts, we propose a mandatory waiting period between the sale and the
1092 payment for certain salvaged material. '11

1093

1094 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

1095 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law
1096 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

1097

1098 **LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS**

1099 The State of Maryland should institute policy whereby unsuccessful plaintiffs initiating
1100 litigation against farm operations in Maryland shall be liable for the defendant's legal fees and
1101 appropriate damages in the event that the defendant prevails in the course of the suit.'12

1102 **Contributory Negligence**

1103 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock
1104 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a
1105 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's
1106 responsible actions. '04

1107 **Agricultural Immunity,**

1108 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '06

1109 We support immunity from liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers to afford
1110 the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '14

1111

1112 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

1113 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public
1114 monies.'06

1115

1116 **LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY**

1117 Government officials and inspectors must be required to follow stringent biosecurity
1118 practices and respect private property rights at all times when visiting farms. '17

1119 We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. '17

1120 We urge MDA to work with USDA to review and clarify the tagging process under the
1121 Premise ID program for all livestock producers. '17

1122

1123 **LOCAL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

1124 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08

1125

1126 **MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

1127 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow industrial hemp as an agricultural
1128 crop.'07

1129 We oppose the production and sale of recreational marijuana. '14

1130

1131 **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

1132 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the
1133 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as necessary,
1134 including the purchase of needed equipment. '15

1135

NONTIDAL WETLANDS

We oppose the present definition of Nontidal wetlands as set forth in the 1989 “Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands.” This definition would designate many acres of marginal wetlands that possess minimal wetlands values. It would also include many acres of cropland that has been farmed historically. ‘05

We support the revision of the “Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands” to exclude:

(1) cropland that was farmed prior to the enactment of any laws dealing with the regulation; ‘05

(2) areas with woody or natural vegetation that are not ponded for more than fifteen consecutive days during some part of the growing season. ‘05

This definition should also be used for any existing or proposed state legislation. It is imperative that the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service review the definition of Nontidal wetlands and evaluate its implications on agriculture. Furthermore, it is our belief that all three of the criteria should exist before land is considered a wetland and we hope the manual will be amended accordingly. ‘05

We support the designation of the Natural Resource Conservation Service as the lead agency for the development of uniform wetlands delineation. ‘06

Agriculture needs to be exempt from mitigation for agricultural activities where the farmer has, and is carrying on good agricultural practices. ‘07

We recommend that when wetlands are identified, property owners must be notified and an appeal or review process be developed. ‘07

The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should be deemed “the taking of private property” and the landowner should be “justly compensated.” ‘08

Maryland regulations should not be more stringent than the federal regulations regarding non-tidal wetlands in agricultural land. ‘08

We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. ‘08

We urge local control of regulations and permits limiting the use of wetlands. ‘07

NOXIOUS WEEDS

Noxious Weed List

We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, kudzu, multi-flora rose (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry), Japanese stiltgrass, Palmer Amaranth and Asiatic tearthumb (mile-a-minute vine) placed on the noxious weed list. ‘18

We urge the SHA to submit a realistic fiscal impact statement related to adding palmer amaranth to the noxious weed list. ‘18

Compliance on Government-Owned Land and Private Land Under Government Contract

We insist that local, county, state, federal governments, and public utilities control invasive species and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. ‘18

We urge FSA and NRCS to educate private landowners about invasive species of weeds and control methods before and during the contract period. ‘18

1184 **Enforcement**

1185 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the
1186 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,
1187 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's
1188 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '18

1189 We recommend increasing the funding to provide proper enforcement of the noxious
1190 weed law and maintain a viable education, prevention and treatment program. '18

1191 We recommend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators
1192 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are
1193 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1194 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1195 non-crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all of the control methods outlined by the
1196 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '18

1197 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1198 conservation programs so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1199 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '18

1200 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop procedures for adding new
1201 weeds to the noxious weed list. These procedures should include an estimate of the cost to
1202 control the weed. '18

1203 **Public Education**

1204 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1205 general public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of noxious
1206 weeds. '18

1207 **Weed Control Methods**

1208 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1209 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and
1210 eliminate these noxious weeds. '18

1211 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious
1212 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will
1213 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination. '18

1214 We support the state providing cost share for control of noxious weeds and other weeds
1215 of concern. '18

1216 We support counties and the state to work with HOAs, Forest Conservation Easements
1217 and Storm Water Management Areas to control their noxious weeds and weeds of concern. '18

1218 **Weeds of Concern**

1219 We urge MDA in cooperation with University of Maryland Extension to create a weeds
1220 of concern program that identifies new or herbicide resistant weeds of concern, educates state
1221 agencies, land owners and farmers on how to identify and manage these weeds, and encourages
1222 state agencies, land owners and farmers to implement best management practices to control these
1223 weeds. '18

1224

1225 **NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**

1226 **Nutrient Management for Farms**

1227 We believe in a voluntary nutrient management program and that all farmers should
1228 apply nutrients in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound science.
1229 '07

1230 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of nutrient
1231 management plans. '09

1232 We support a nutrient management program that: (1) produces real water quality
1233 improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3) requires reasonable recordkeeping,

1234 (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5) provides adequate flexibility for
1235 farmers to properly manage their operations, (6) provides appropriate inspection and
1236 enforcement, and (7) provides appropriate incentives to offset operating and capital costs
1237 incurred by complying with the requirements of the program. '12

1238 We are opposed to the changes to the nutrient management regulations, which make MD
1239 agriculture less competitive by increasing the cost and difficulty of farming in Maryland without
1240 compensation. '13

1241 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.
1242 '10

1243 We recommend that MDA and the University of Maryland review and update the
1244 nitrogen use recommendations in UMD's Numan Pro software program, which is used for
1245 nutrient management plans. '18

1246 We recommend the composting of animals be an approved method of disposing of
1247 animal mortalities on the farm. '17

1248 The state should not expand the Phosphorus Management Tool as long as the agricultural
1249 community is on track to meet the 2025 WIP clean-up goal. '18

1250 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient
1251 management program to achieve the following:

- 1252 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- 1253 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.
1254 '05
- 1255 c. Prevent yield capping. '05
- 1256 d. Allow the use of scientifically valid nutrient recommendations from the University of
1257 Maryland or other public and private sources. '18
- 1258 e. The elimination of the Nutrient Management Voucher requirements and the transfer of
1259 the resultant savings to Extension for nutrient management plan writing. '10
- 1260 f. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12
- 1261 g. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on
1262 an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14
- 1263 h. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and technologies.
1264 '18

1265 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a
1266 farm based on a complaint. '09

1267 We support the continuation of the farmer-filed annual certification of plan compliance
1268 along with an annual summary of nutrient application rather than requiring the filing of the
1269 completed plan. '06

1270 MDA should develop an optional on-line reporting system for the annual summaries. '09

1271 **Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality**

1272 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain
1273 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately-written nutrient
1274 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government
1275 entity. '10

1276 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date, they should be
1277 properly destroyed. '08

1278 **Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education**

1279 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1280 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '13

1281 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**

1282 We seek full funding for Nutrient Management Cost-Share for the development and
1283 updating of nutrient management plans by private industry and by University of Maryland
1284 Extension. All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '12

1285 We request that funding for nutrient management education and plan development go
1286 directly to University of Maryland Extension in order to hire and maintain adequate permanent
1287 nutrient management advisors in each county. '10

1288 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1289 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1290 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1291 We strongly oppose the Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised
1292 Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by MDE. '12

1293 We oppose public hearings for CAFO permit renewals that do not include facility
1294 expansion or modification. '16

1295 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1296 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1297 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '11

1298 We strongly oppose any fee structure for reviewing or inspecting MAFO or CAFO
1299 operation by MDE '14

1300 We support transferring the MAFO permitting program from MDE to MDA while
1301 decoupling the NPDES permitting process from the MAFO permit. '17

1302 **Manure and Litter Management**

1303 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for crop
1304 production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '15

1305 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.
1306 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies – beyond those previously conducted by
1307 UMD researchers – that include different soil types, locations and manure types before any ban
1308 on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1309 Universities within the Bay Watershed should collaboratively research the benefits of
1310 organic nutrients vs. commercial fertilizer on leachable soil types and soils with high water
1311 tables. '13

1312 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1313 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1314 We support diversion of manure from Equine operations from going to county landfills.
1315 We encourage government funding of composting facilities. '18

1316 We oppose being required to field stack mushroom soil compost. '18

1317 **Soil Testing**

1318 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1319 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '13

1320

1321

NUTRIENT TRADING

1322 We oppose any form of government mandated and controlled trading for the compliance
1323 for nutrient reductions from point sources of nutrient loading in lieu of Biological Nutrient
1324 Reduction (BNR) upgrading or delaying of any sewage treatment facility upgrades. '10

1325 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient reduction that allow farmers to receive
1326 fair compensation for nutrient removal and/or reductions. '16

1327 We support allowing Shellfish/Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for
1328 Maryland to meet its water quality goals. '16

1329 We oppose using the wastewater treatment plant's portion of the flush tax dollars to jump
1330 start a Maryland nutrient trading program. '16

1331

1332

POULTRY INDUSTRY

1333 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter. '17

1334 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a cost-
1335 share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the mandatory
1336 covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '17

1337 We oppose any effort to mandate moving poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '17

1338 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy generation.
1339 '17

1340 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1341 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere in
1342 the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '17

1343 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research-based guidelines for field
1344 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1345 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '17

1346 We oppose government regulations that would require chicken grower/poultry company
1347 layout policies. '17

1348 We support Delmarva Poultry Industry's (DPI) best management practices for good
1349 neighbor relations, which cover house location on property, manure handling practices, carcass
1350 disposal system, vegetative buffers, odor prevention & control, and contact with neighbors. '17

1351 We oppose state mandated air quality monitoring or air filtering on poultry houses over
1352 and above DPI's best management practices for good neighbor relations. '17

1353

1354

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

1355 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1356 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner. '07

1357 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production of
1358 an agricultural commodity on farmland. '07

1359 We oppose any mandatory retirement of land for buffers and setbacks. '12

1360 Government action that diminishes a property's value or an owner's right to use his
1361 property constitutes a taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should provide
1362 due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been diminished.
1363 The just basis for compensation must be at least fair market value. '14

1364 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and state
1365 levels. '07

1366 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the party
1367 disputing any property lines. '06

1368 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to notify
1369 all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified letter,
1370 in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '11

Eminent Domain

1372 We believe the Supreme Court "Kelo" decision violates the basic principles and
1373 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1374 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1375 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We
1376 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and
1377 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of

1378 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1379 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop. '06

1380 We urge the elimination of the "quick take" condemnation process. '12

1381 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1382 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1383 property.'10

1384 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.
1385 '06

1386 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for the
1387 purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original landowner
1388 or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other than for which
1389 it was originally acquired. '05

1390 We urge that the compensation must include the total devaluation of the farm due to the
1391 negative impact, including visual, of any eminent domain project. '17

1392

1393 **PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS**

1394 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1395 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of parkland being purchased in this
1396 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1397 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1398 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to use
1399 part or all of their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1400 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1401 '15

1402 We urge Program Open Space revenues that were diverted to the General Fund to be
1403 repaid. '14

1404 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1405 present parkland rather than the acquisition of new land.'06

1406 We urge that the open space program continue to receive 0.5% of the Maryland real
1407 estate transfer tax. '15

1408

1409 **PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS**

1410 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1411 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding.'07

1412 Also, we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property
1413 owners of the easement rights of the PDA.'06

1414 We oppose any effort to usurp control of PDA maintenance from the PDA managers.
1415 Any federal, state, or private conservation practices should not prevent, hinder or interfere with
1416 the maintenance of the PDA main, tributary or right of way. '18

1417

1418 **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

1419 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1420 present to the general public of the state. We urge the State and County Health Departments to
1421 gather as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs and
1422 treatment of these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information.
1423 '06

1424 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1425 problem in order to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state. '06

1426 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1427 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

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PUBLIC OWNED LAND

Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '18

We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by willing sellers only. '18

In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges and wild lands to determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate the sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '18

The state should compensate counties for the loss of property tax revenue on public lands. '18

We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or other recreational uses in an effort to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and administering these lands. [2009] '18

We urge the state to require and implement a wildlife management plan for all public, wild and forest land. '18

Timberland Management

We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '18

PUBLIC RELATIONS

American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome and most affordable food in the world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the media unless substantiated and accurate. '08

We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues. Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors and subsequent retailers. '08

We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and information regarding the local farm community. '08

We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland agriculture to the public through various media outlets. '08

We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that would:

1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the environment.
4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals and educational displays.
5. Include a speaker's bureau.'08

We encourage state, county and local government officials to take a more active role in supporting, promoting and defending agriculture. '09

1476 **RAILROADS**

1477 Where economically feasible, we urge the state government to take whatever action
1478 necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade them where necessary, including
1479 adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

1480
1481 **RECYCLING**

1482 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury to
1483 animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that would
1484 require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we recommend that a
1485 sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for recycling. '13

1486 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we
1487 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics.'07

1488 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '16

1489 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials, as
1490 well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

1491 **Tire Fund & Tire Recycling**

1492 The state Tire Fund collection program should be expanded to include a program that
1493 would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state annually. '16

1494
1495 **RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS**

1496 When a utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be
1497 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.
1498 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be
1499 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary as a result of building waterways,
1500 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground where possible
1501 and that the areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars and weeds
1502 by the utility company.'06

1503 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights of way or property lines
1504 when feasible.'05

1505 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used
1506 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the underlying
1507 property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be returned to
1508 adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee simple, the
1509 property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first refusal upon
1510 abandonment. '07

1511 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail use,
1512 and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will preserve
1513 the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. '09

1514 We oppose the taking of additional "Right of Way" to add "Bicycle" lanes to county or
1515 state highways. '15

1516
1517 **RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS**

1518 We believe in and support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which
1519 protects the right of the people to keep and bear Arms. '15

1520 We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by law-
1521 abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, long arm, autoloader or manual loader. Furthermore, we
1522 are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition. '15

1524 **RIGHT-TO-FARM**

1525 We support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect the privilege
1526 and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce without undue or
1527 unreasonable restrictions, regulations or harassment from government or the private sector. We
1528 support actions to ensure that farmers are protected from undue liability and nuisance suits when
1529 carrying out normal production practices. '05

1530 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland "Right-to-Farm" Law but believe that it should
1531 be strengthened. '05

1532 We support an amendment to Maryland's Constitution recognizing that agriculture,
1533 which provides food, energy, health benefits, and security, is the foundation and stabilizing force
1534 of Maryland's economy. To protect this vital sector of Maryland's economy, the right of farmers
1535 to engage in farming practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state. '14

1536 We recommend that right-to-farm laws extend to the ag-supported industry, i.e.
1537 equipment dealers, grain and feed storage, processing, etc. We also urge that it be evaluated and
1538 amended if necessary, to make sure that the use of scare guns (for crop protection) is allowed.
1539 '11

1540 Before entering into the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the
1541 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review in an attempt to settle
1542 the nuisance complaint between the effected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in
1543 nuisance complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '09

1544 Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead
1545 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '07

1546 **Funding to Protect Farms**

1547 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1548 environmental suits filed against farmers. '11

1550 **RIPARIAN BUFFERS**

1551 We favor voluntary incentive-based programs for establishing riparian buffers. Grass
1552 species or natural vegetation is preferred. When forest buffers are established provisions should
1553 be made for the future harvest of such trees without penalty. '07

1554 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis. '07

1555 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1556 use. '09

1558 **ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE**

1559 **Road Design**

1560 We suggest the State and County Highway Administration study newly widened as well
1561 as existing roads and correct any dangerous conditions created by landowners placing objects too
1562 close to the roadway. (For example: steel objects, reflectors, ornamental fences, or trees). '07

1563 We recommend that the State Highway Administration and county roads departments
1564 consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture when designing islands or the placement of
1565 road signs and mailboxes so that they do not prohibit or make difficult the passage of farm
1566 machinery. (For example, signs or mailboxes should not be placed directly opposite each other
1567 on both sides of the road. Staggering signs and mailboxes on either side of a roadway provides
1568 more room for the passage of very large equipment.) We suggest that batteries of mailboxes be
1569 used where possible and placed off of the main road in new developments. '08

1570 We urge the State Highway Administration to improve access for farm equipment at the
1571 signalized intersections on Maryland highways. '06

1572 We urge the Department of Transportation to review the use of traffic circles on state
1573 highways to identify problems involved with moving farm equipment around the circles and
1574 through the intersection and to establish guidelines to solve the problems.'09

1575 We believe that land involved in highway interchanges should be properly designed and
1576 landscaped so that it is free of sight obstructions, attractive and easily maintained. We encourage
1577 the state to plant buffers on state property, including state highways on/off ramps and median
1578 strips and maintain them following the same requirements placed on CREP areas. '05

1579 No curbing should be placed on rural roads with less than 13 feet from the centerline to
1580 the curb.'07

1581 **Road Construction**

1582 An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We
1583 urge that a highway system, including adequate bridges, be built and maintained, to provide for
1584 the movement of goods and produce throughout the state. However, due to the high cost of
1585 highway construction, we recommend, where feasible, that existing roads and bridges be
1586 upgraded and improved instead of building new roads along different routes.'07

1587 We encourage the State Highway Administration to install painted islands rather than
1588 concrete islands at intersections wherever feasible. '07

1589 We urge that revenues from the highway fuel taxes be used for highway construction and
1590 maintenance only. '11

1591 We believe that the state's share of the overall operation and maintenance cost of the
1592 mass transit systems should be limited to 25%, with 75% coming from the users and the local
1593 jurisdiction served by the system. '14

1594 We urge the counties and state to enforce the law requiring anyone working along our
1595 roads to provide safety devices and personnel to insure safe travel, as does the State Highway
1596 Department. '07

1597 We encourage the State Highway Administration to proceed with urgently needed road
1598 construction projects. '08

1599 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project
1600 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land
1601 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has been
1602 initiated. '08

1603 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

1604 **Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)**

1605 We urge a change in the law to mandate the trimming of tree limbs on both new growth
1606 and existing trees for safe travel of all vehicles on roadways. '11

1607 We recommend that trees and limbs be cut back a minimum of five (5) feet from the road
1608 edge and to a height of 16 feet on the shoulder, with reflective material placed on guide wires
1609 and poles that are surrounded or at the very edge of the pavement.'05

1610 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1611 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and enhance scenic views.'12

1612 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments control invasive species and
1613 abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '17

1614 The government should increase the level of maintenance to ensure safe passage of
1615 vehicles.'12

1616 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1617 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of the
1618 tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous and diseased trees.'12

1619 We highly recommend that State Highway Administration (SHA) send at least a 6-month
1620 notice to adjacent landowners whenever plantings are being proposed along SHA rights-of-way
1621 that are currently in agricultural production. '15

1622 We urge the State Highway Administration to accommodate the movement of farm
1623 equipment into fields in agricultural production when installing right of way projects. '17
1624 We strongly encourage SHA to continue to allow farming on these rights-of-way and
1625 work with farmers to find other suitable sites for plantings on adjacent land. '15
1626 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1627 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the trimming
1628 and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and simplify the
1629 permit process. '10

RURAL COMMUNITIES

1632 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was
1633 created to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13
1634 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
1635 county governments during the legislative session. '13

RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM

1638 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
1639 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
1640 Preservation Program.'06
1641 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
1642 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
1643 '07

SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

School Standards

1647 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
1648 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
1649 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all and
1650 should be enforced by the school system. '07
1651 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07
1652 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging in
1653 illegal drug activity. '07

School Lunches & Farm to School Program

1655 We support the State's Farm-to-School program and recommend funding be increased.
1656 We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote this program and
1657 purchase more locally grown products for school nutrition programs. '17

School Year

1659 We oppose a year-round and/or a staggered school year. We support a school year that
1660 starts after Labor Day and ends no later than June 15th. '16

School Attendance Policy

1662 Participation in agricultural activities (e.g. 4-H, FFA and the Miss County or Miss
1663 Maryland Farm Bureau Programs) should be allowed as an excused absence and should not
1664 count against the number of allowable absences set by the county school system in question. '05

SEAT BELTS

1667 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other vehicles.
1668 '16
1669

1670 **SEED TESTING**

1671 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a
1672 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider.'11

1673 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from any certified seed lab. '14
1674

1675 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

1676 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate the current regulations concerning
1677 septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue economic
1678 hardship on landowners.'06

1679 We support requiring the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) septic systems in
1680 environmentally sensitive areas where significant impact to the Bay can be demonstrated. '11

1681 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

1682 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished land
1683 value incurred by any septic legislation. '11
1684

1685 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1686 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
1687 the federal Class A standard. '07

1688 We oppose any legislation that would allow biosolids utilized on farmland to be less
1689 restrictive than the standards outlined in MDA's 2012 Nutrient Management Guidelines. While
1690 we recognize that biosolids are an excellent source of natural fertilizer, we believe it should be
1691 utilized under the same standards as farm produced natural fertilizer. '12

1692 We support continued research and public education into sludge use to assure proper
1693 application rates and practices that protect farmland. '14

1694 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
1695 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability and
1696 potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be imported into
1697 Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '08

1698 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be held
1699 accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
1700 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator. '08
1701

1702 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a composite
1703 test be taken and recorded each day.'07

1704 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
1705 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'07

1706 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
1707 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '05

1708 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
1709 that are more restrictive than State standards. '09
1710

1711 **STATE DESIGNATIONS**

1712 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1713 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts to
1714 change this designation. '07
1715

1716 **STATE FFA**

1717 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education to fund a full-
1718 time permanent position through the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) to

1719 serve FFA youth in Maryland. This position should be field-based under the direction of the
1720 College and Career Readiness Division. '15

1721 We recommend that at least one high school in each county and Baltimore City have an
1722 agricultural curriculum program and an FFA program. '15

1723

1724 **STRAY VOLTAGE**

1725 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies
1726 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and
1727 livestock. '07

1728

1729 **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

1730 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that
1731 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

1732 1. It has to be profitable for farmers. '08

1733 2. It must work to conserve soil, water and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08

1734 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08

1735 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08

1736 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture. '08

1737 6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency. '10

1738 7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic farming practices. '10

1739

1740 **TAXES**

1741 **Admission and Amusement Tax**

1742 Recreational activities that are carried out in conjunction with a farm operation should be
1743 exempt from admission and amusement tax. '06

1744 **Capital Gains Tax**

1745 We support an exemption from the Maryland capital gains tax on any profit realized from
1746 the sale of a perpetual conservation easement. '15

1747 **Estate Tax**

1748 We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland. '07

1749 We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and
1750 conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax. '12

1751 In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use
1752 value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real
1753 estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate.
1754 '06

1755 We support the position that all property used for agricultural purposes, whether it is
1756 rented to non-family members or not, shall be treated as qualified agricultural property under the
1757 provisions of Maryland estate tax law. '13

1758 **Fuel Tax**

1759 We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to
1760 allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level. '10

1761 We oppose increasing the state fuel tax. '11

1762 **Income Tax**

1763 Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal
1764 tax code. '10

1765 **Inheritance Tax**

1766 First and foremost, we strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '04
1767 Until then, we support taxing nieces and nephews at the previous lineal tax rate on inherited
1768 property. '05

1769 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-
1770 owned agribusinesses. '05

1771 **Health Taxes**

1772 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '09

1773 **Property Tax**

1774 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm or
1775 agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '15

1776 We urge amending the Agriculture Use Assessment Law to prescribe a standardized
1777 formula to ensure the full value of this special assessment is not offset by other adjustments in
1778 the total property value of the assessment for farm properties with a homesite. '17

1779 We urge amending the basis for a property tax assessment appeal to include evaluating
1780 the proper application of the agriculture use assessment to the total property value. '17

1781 The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly
1782 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '08

1783 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings including tenant houses. '18

1784 We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings '12

1785 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
1786 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '06

1787 **Sales and Use Taxes**

1788 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
1789 related services from the state sales tax. '11

1790 In order to clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain Ag purchases,
1791 we recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt
1792 card. '08

1793 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '16

1794 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1795 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
1796 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
1797 operation or structure. '07

1798 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1799 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as general
1800 fund enhancements. '04

1801

1802

TIMBER HARVESTING

1803 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1804 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest
1805 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1806 basis. '07

1807 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state and
1808 county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1809 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '12

1810 No conservation easement should prohibit timber harvest. '14

1811

1812

TOBACCO

1813 **Master Settlement Agreement**

1814 We recommend that as the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is reviewed by the
1815 General Assembly each year the amount to be secured for the Southern Maryland farmers be at
1816 least kept at a minimum of 5% according to the original settlement agreement. '08

1817 We recommend that if the General Assembly does not secure at least 5% of the Master
1818 Settlement Agreement for Southern Maryland farmers, those farmers who accepted the

1819 conditions of the Tobacco Buyout be relieved of those restrictions in total and be able to once
1820 again produce tobacco for sale on a market basis. '13

1821 **Tobacco Industry**

1822 We urge the state to rescind the restriction on the use of tobacco barns as stated in the
1823 Tobacco Buyout Contract. '06

1824 The State Tobacco Warehouse located in Cheltenham, Maryland was built entirely using
1825 funds derived from tobacco farmers. Therefore, we urge the Maryland Department of
1826 Agriculture to always consider any agricultural use as its top priority and leasing only be
1827 considered as a secondary use. '06

1828 **Tobacco Taxes**

1829 We oppose any increase in taxes on tobacco products. '09

1830

1831

TRESPASSING

1832 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.
1833 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
1834 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
1835 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
1836 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
1837 injury sustained by trespassers. '13

1838 The maximum fine should be raised to \$5,000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
1839 destruction of property. '18

1840 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
1841 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs or
1842 paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission and to
1843 know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private land. '06

1844 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a jail
1845 term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine if a minor is convicted. The
1846 offender should be required to pay the property owner three times the amount of destruction
1847 including time loss and all court cost. '14

1848 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
1849 by others without written permission of up to \$5,000.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up to
1850 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore, violators
1851 should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '18

1852 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
1853 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
1854 existing laws and regulations. '07

1855 **Unmanned Aerial Systems**

1856 We request legislation be enacted so that no person, entity, or state agency shall use a
1857 manned aircraft, drone, or unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance or observation under the
1858 doctrine of open fields of any individual, property owned by an individual, farm or agricultural
1859 industry without the consent of that individual, property owner, farm or agricultural industry. '13

1860 We support the use of unmanned aerial systems in agricultural businesses provided
1861 written permission is obtained from the property owner. '14

1862

1863

TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES

1864 In order to achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1865 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion of
1866 this program; '08

1867 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient
1868 runoff into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban areas,

1869 as well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E. deicing aircraft and
1870 parking lots); '08

1871 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific
1872 research, as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately
1873 result in the Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1874 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with
1875 maximum cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the
1876 purchase of equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1877 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay in order to
1878 increase consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay.
1879 '08

1880 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
1881 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08

1882

1883

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY

Bicycle Safety

1885 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
1886 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '07

1887 We recommend that scheduled bicycle, running or similar recreational events be
1888 conducted in a manner that does not inhibit agricultural activities. '18

1889 While more bicycles are using rural roads earlier in the morning and later in the evening,
1890 we recommend that these bicycles display SMV signs because of the poor visibility during this
1891 time of day. '08

Driver Safety Rules

1893 We oppose any further restriction (beyond that in place in 2010) on the use of cell phones
1894 or similar devices in motor vehicles. '12

1895 We oppose any legislation to increase the age to obtain a driver's license.'12

Fines & Surcharges

1897 We support the concept of allocation of truck fine revenues to the transportation fund. '07

1898 Present law only allows the driver of a truck to appeal a fine or violation against the truck
1899 or its contents. We recommend that the law be amended to allow the driver or the owner to
1900 make such an appeal. '06

Infrastructure Needs

1902 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
1903 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '08

1904 We support the improvements to Interstates 495, 270, 295, 81 and 70. '18

Inspections

1906 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
1907 motor vehicles.'07

1908 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.'07

Safe Movement of Farm Equipment

1910 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of farmers. '07

1911 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the proper
1912 use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend that a
1913 mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to aid in
1914 recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and roads in
1915 an effort to improve safety conditions. '07

1916 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow-moving vehicle signs for any
1917 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced.'07

1918 We recommend Maryland State Highway Administration use the digital messaging signs
1919 to warn motorists of agricultural equipment use on highways during spring planting season,
1920 summer small grain harvest and fall grain harvest. '14

1921 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
1922 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
1923 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are (1)
1924 properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped approached
1925 another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the "other driver"
1926 being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her vehicle. '08

1927 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
1928 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
1929 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '08

1930 **Truck Regulations**

1931 We urge the state to adopt the federal update to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety laws
1932 (MAP-21) that are beneficial to farmers. Some of these changes include: relief from hours-of-
1933 service rules during planting and harvesting seasons and exemption from the CDL physical
1934 qualifications requirement (medical card). '13

1935 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent with
1936 those of neighboring states. '17

1937 We recommend that the allowable weight for tri-axle farm trucks with farm tags be
1938 increased from 65,000 lbs to 70,000 lbs. '07

1939 We support the Class K Farm Area vehicle registration. We encourage MVA to require
1940 applicants to show proof of farming activity by providing a copy of their schedule F Tax form.
1941 '07

1942 We support the K Tag radius being a distance of 25 miles or more. '18

1943 We recommend trucks hauling agricultural products that were loaded in fields or other
1944 off-highway locations be allowed a Gross Vehicle Weight limit tolerance of up to 15% as well as
1945 a 15% axle weight tolerance. '14

1946 We support legislation that would allow an increase for live-haul poultry trucks operating
1947 on Maryland highways within 100 miles of the plant a weight variance of 3% to account for the
1948 variations in bird weight. '14

1949 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal but an axle weight is off, enforcement personnel
1950 should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '04

1951 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products to
1952 10 miles. '09

1953 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws. '07

1954 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
1955 agricultural or commercial traffic on State highways. '11

1956 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
1957 '04

1958 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '08

1959 Vehicles with farm tag registrations should be exempt from the Inner Bridge Formula.
1960 '07

1961 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
1962 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive Maintenance
1963 Program. '05

1964 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
1965 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should be
1966 established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time periods
1967 to get them repaired. '08

1968 We support legislation that would increase the maximum length for any combination of
1969 vehicles with a power unit that is a cargo-carrying vehicle from 55 feet to 65 feet. '08
1970 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. 08
1971 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within each
1972 class. '08
1973 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
1974 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
1975 transportation of farm commodities. '08
1976

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEMS

Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority

1978
1979 We recommend the University of Maryland systems establish an Ag Producers Board of
1980 Advisors. '11

1981 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
1982 but not at the expense of "traditional crop" courses and research. '08

1983 We urge the University of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional research as
1984 is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support University of
1985 Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education programs. '04

1986 We recommend the reestablishment of the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to
1987 advise and assist the UMD Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future
1988 structure of UMD Extension. This committee should consist of commodity groups and stake
1989 holders to represent the different geographic regions of the state. '15

1990 We support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and
1991 its tripartite mission of research, teaching, and extension. Because of the many challenges for
1992 Agriculture in the future, which cannot be met without qualified graduates, we support the need
1993 to provide curricula for students who aspire to be the future farmers, agriculture leaders, ag
1994 teachers, extension agents, scientists, and more. '16

1995 We urge the University of Maryland to fill and support the Weed Science position.
1996 Strong emphasis should be centered on the importance of practical herbicide trials and the
1997 dissemination of the results. '18

Funding

1999 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
2000 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
2001 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
2002 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
2003 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
2004 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '13

2005 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
2006 for funding the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We
2007 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable funding
2008 support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the University. We
2009 also urge that the leadership for the Institute for Government Service be restored to the Extension
2010 Service. '11

Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center

2012 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which provides assistance to
2013 farmers for business plan development. '08

Law School/Litigation

2015 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
2016 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
2017 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state clients.

2018 Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm business
2019 should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being accepted by
2020 the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should provide equal
2021 representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '13

2022 **Research and Data**

2023 We urge the University of Maryland and the MDA to conduct further research on small
2024 grain crops that will maximize yields while utilizing fertilizers in the best ways for both plant
2025 uptake and environmental benefits. '12

2026 We support a joint effort by the University of Maryland and the MDA to develop and
2027 publish information that thoroughly and accurately describes the role of agriculture in the state's
2028 economy and in protecting and enhancing the state's natural resource base. '07

2029 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
2030 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system. '07

2031 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
2032 varieties of vegetables, fruits and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase competition
2033 with other areas of the country. '08

2034 We urge the University to reinstate the "Field Days" at the research farms. '15

2035 **Teacher Preparation**

2036 We urge the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to
2037 continue to develop and expand the current program that provides an Agricultural Education
2038 major, giving students a specialization in Ag Education leading to a career path as a high school
2039 agricultural educator and/or extension educator. We support allocating new resources to the
2040 program. '16

2041 **Tuition**

2042 We believe that tuition increases at the schools within the University of Maryland System
2043 be limited to the cost of living index. '15

2044 **University of Maryland Extension**

2045 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
2046 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
2047 compete in a competitive market place. The strength of Extension has always been at the local
2048 level. We recommend that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
2049 Agent/Educator. '14

2050 Area Extension director positions should be eliminated and replaced by previous system
2051 of county extension directors '15

2052 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to develop a nitrogen test to use in
2053 the fall prior to planting small grains. '08

2054 Due to agriculture's ever-increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
2055 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment
2056 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
2057 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
2058 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11

2059 We strongly recommend that the University of Maryland maintain adequate staffing to
2060 write and certify nutrient management plans and to train individual farmers to write their own
2061 plans. '09

2062 We support maintaining an extension educator for agriculture in each county. '18

2063

2064

WILDLANDS

2065 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
2066 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas

2067 considered “wildlands” should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
2068 management plans. ‘08

2069

2070

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

2071 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to
2072 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to
2073 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident Canada
2074 geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative impacts on
2075 agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the Chesapeake Bay.
2076 ‘09

2077 We support the creation of a landowner ombudsman within DNR to focus on wildlife
2078 management on private lands. ‘17

2079 We urge county and state parkland to have a valid wildlife management plan to control
2080 and properly maintain the wildlife population on this land. ‘17

Bird Control

2082 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any
2083 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and
2084 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. ‘08

2085 Because they pose a threat to livestock, especially newborn calves, lambs, etc., we urge
2086 removing black headed vultures from the Migratory Birds Treaty Act. ‘18

Black Bear

2088 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western Maryland
2089 to other counties. ‘07

2090 We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to
2091 control the black bear population in our state. ‘15

2092 We support the creation of a Bear Management Permit system for the management of
2093 troublesome bears ‘15

2094 We urge that bear damage permits also be issued during the time when the bears are
2095 damaging crops not just during the bear hunting season, and as a compromise the bear hide is
2096 turned over to DNR. ‘18

2097 We urge that the Bear season damage permit apply to the farm where the damage occurs
2098 and contiguous properties, with the landowner’s permission. ‘17

2099 We support changes to the bear hunt which will grant landowners more equitable access
2100 to the hunt. ‘15

2101 We support the hunting of bear by all agricultural producers and their immediate family
2102 on property they own during the regular bear season without going through the lottery. ‘17

Coyote

2104 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. ‘09

Feral Hogs

2106 Feral hogs should be regulated as a “varmint” species. ‘15

Deer

2108 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state’s overpopulation of
2109 deer are of major concern to Maryland’s farmers. ‘17

2110 We urge DNR to lower the ratio of deer per square mile. ‘18

2111 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
2112 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
2113 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: ‘17

- 2114 (1) Regulate deer as a “varmint” species where local, overpopulated herds persist. ‘17
- 2115 (2) List Sika deer as an invasive species due to extreme crop damage. ‘17

- 2116 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
2117 seasons. '17
- 2118 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd
2119 population count. '17
- 2120 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
2121 areas. '17
- 2122 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
2123 herd. '17
- 2124 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '17
- 2125 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent to
2126 agricultural lands. '17
- 2127 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and processing
2128 harvested deer. '17
- 2129 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
2130 management. '17
- 2131 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
2132 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of deer
2133 population. '17
- 2134 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '17
- 2135 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
2136 tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17
- 2137 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a plan
2138 to manage and control wildlife populations. '17
- 2139 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an
2140 increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17
- 2141 **Deer Crop Damage**
- 2142 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer and we support immediate
2143 enactment:
- 2144 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17
- 2145 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17
- 2146 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop within
2147 the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17
- 2148 (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17
- 2149 (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17
- 2150 (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
2151 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
- 2152 (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
2153 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
2154 disposing properly should be eliminated. '17
- 2155 (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to use the weapon of choice at all
2156 times for filling Deer Management permits. '17
- 2157 (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
- 2158 (10) The commercial sale of venison from certified processing facilities. '17
- 2159 (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
- 2160 (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the
2161 authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated as
2162 such. '17
- 2163 (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be
2164 deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17

2165 (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation non-
2166 profit under a crop damage permit. '17

2167 (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to construct wildlife
2168 fence around agriculture fields to help deter crop damage. '18

2169 **Fox Chasing**

2170 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from landowners
2171 to conduct the hunt. '08

2172 **Furbearers**

2173 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

2174 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase a
2175 stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any fee.
2176 '08

2177 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

2178 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
2179 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture of
2180 fur-bearing wildlife. '10

2181 We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

2182 We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species similar to groundhogs if
2183 they are causing property damage. '17

2184 **Hunting Ethics and Liability**

2185 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
2186 taking place. '07

2187 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
2188 manner similar to motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record
2189 after an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

2190 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
2191 the maximum extent possible. '06

2192 Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by
2193 hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting
2194 activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in
2195 safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established by
2196 the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

2197 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

2198 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
2199 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
2200 regulations. '17

2201 We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the purpose
2202 of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18

2203 We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands. '17

2204 We support season-long Sunday hunting for the first 3 hours after sunrise in counties
2205 where Sunday hunting does not already exist. '17

2206 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
2207 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
2208 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
2209 during that season. '17

2210 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17

2211 We support extending the deer hunting season through February. '17

2212 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17

2213 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17

2214 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17

2215 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
2216 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren and employees when hunting only on that property.
2217 We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and his/her spouse,
2218 children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural purposes (or a
2219 sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this farmland. We are
2220 opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license exemption to persons
2221 (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under the age of 16. '17

2222 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
2223 hunting or trapping privileges. '17

2224 **Waterfowl**

2225 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2226 Service to take any and all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow
2227 goose population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

2228 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
2229 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

2230 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
2231 throughout, starting about November 5th. '09

2232 We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on
2233 or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level
2234 consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14

2235 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
2236 increase in bag limits. '08

2237 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

2238 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:

2239 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08

2240 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09

2241 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of property
2242 lines. '08

2243 We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows
2244 or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area in order to be charged with baiting. '14

2245 **Waterfowl Crop Damage**

2246 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

2247 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e. recorders or baiters) to
2248 reduce the snow goose population. '08

2249

2250 **YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

2251 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland through:

2252 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '07

2253 (2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '10

2254 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation
2255 easements; '07

2256 (4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

2257 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them. '09

2258 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture to
2259 link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '09