



Maryland Farm Bureau

2020 Policy Book



*As Adopted by the Delegates at the 2019 Annual Meeting
December 8-10, 2019*

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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
5 is non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character. It is organized to provide a means
6 by 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
13 recommendations on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies
14 herein were derived from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm
15 Bureau policy for 2020 as set by voting delegates during the 104th annual convention of the
16 Maryland Farm Bureau on December 10, 2019.

17
18 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

19 **Career Technology Education**

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

25 **Community Colleges & Universities**

26 We urge the introduction or expansion of agricultural programs in the community
27 colleges throughout the state. '19

28 Maryland should fund the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for farmers.
29 '19

30 **Curriculum**

31 We support an effective, systematic instructional program about agriculture in our
32 public schools. We believe the curriculum should include "Introduction to Agriculture Science"
33 starting in elementary school and continuing into middle school and high school to generate
34 awareness of the importance of agriculture to our society and to ensure future generations of
35 well-trained leaders for the agricultural industry. '19

36 We urge the public schools to implement a certified/accredited agricultural curriculum
37 program in at least one high school in each county and Baltimore City. '19

38 We support MAEF's efforts to partner with stakeholders, including county public school
39 systems, farmers, and allies, to expand agricultural education in the State of Maryland. '19

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

46 '19

47 We support increased funding for Pre-K through 12th grade agricultural education
48 programs. Funds should be used for program development and improvement, staff
49 development, curriculum including CASE (Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education), Career
50 & Technology Education and extended day/year employment. We strongly support Ag science
51 teachers who provide student leadership in FFA and supervised agricultural experience as
52 components of the program. '19

53 We support the State of Maryland becoming an FFA affiliated State. '19

54 We oppose the expenditure of public funds to promote animal rights and the use of
55 educational materials in public schools that discourage the use of animal products. '19

56 **Environmental & Agricultural Literacy Requirements**

57 We support and encourage on-farm field trips for preschool and elementary school
58 children to experience the daily life of the farm. '19

59 The public needs to be made aware of the importance of the preservation of agricultural
60 land for a totally healthy environment. We encourage more farm city festivals, including farm
61 tours and educational displays so the general public can have a better understanding of how
62 food is produced. '19

63 We recommend that curriculum for environmental & agricultural literacy as a
64 requirement for graduation be reviewed by the MAEF Board. '19

65 **Funding for MAEF & Ag Education**

66 We support the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation and its efforts to receive
67 legislative funding from the state special fund appropriations and funding through grant-in-aid
68 from the Maryland State Department of Education. '19

69 We support the Maryland Ag Tag and we believe that all fees derived from sales should
70 continue to be used to support MAEF. '19

71 We oppose the huge cost of the Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education as
72 well as its lack of improvements for ag education. '19

73 We further urge the state to restructure the funding formula for public education. '19

74 **Teacher Training**

75 We recommend that training of teachers for Maryland public K-12 schools and colleges
76 include a mini-course in agriculture, and that state educational subdivisions include an in-
77 service day or days to instruct teachers and guidance counselors about agriculture and careers
78 in agriculture. '19

79

80

81

AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

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

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

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

92

93 **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

116 **Ag Preservation Funding**

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

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

122 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '09

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

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

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

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

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

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

136 Furthermore, we recommend that additional county and state incentives for
137 participation should be provided, such as property tax credits for agricultural district properties
138 committed to a term of five years or property tax credits on land where easements have been

139 purchased, and the enactment of a Maryland agricultural land property tax credit program as
140 part of the contract.'09

141 **Appraisals**

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

149 **Mapping**

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

153 **Maryland Agland Preservation Foundation**

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

- 158 (1) The "Right to Farm" provisions provided in the sale of Maryland agricultural land
159 easements should be extended to anyone who is enrolled in an agricultural district.'07
- 160 (2) We direct MALPF to allow other forms of income when it does not interfere with the
161 present agriculture operation or change the agricultural capabilities of the land including
162 expanded permitted uses such as ag tourism and value-added operations. '11
- 163 (3) We support the right of value-added agricultural businesses on MALPF land to sell products
164 not produced or grown on the farm as a secondary attraction (.e.g. sandwiches, t-shirts,
165 small gifts). '07
- 166 (4) We recommend that farms be allowed into the MALPF program without regard to mineral
167 rights issues.'09
- 168 (5) We support the proposal to alter children's lots to allow the right to pass residual lots to a
169 new owner.'11
- 170 (6) We strongly urge MALPF to permit the onsite extraction of gas from farmland under MALPF
171 easement. '08

172 **Other Methods to Preserve Agland**

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

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

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

182 **Transfer Development Rights**

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

184 **Zoning**

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

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

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

192

193

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

220 We oppose production of synthetically produced 'meats' being labeled as meat. '19

221 We support legislation to allow utility cooperatives to apply for grants in order to extend
222 broadband service to underserved rural areas. '19

223

224

AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION

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

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

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

231 We oppose the mandatory use of flow meters on Ag Water appropriation usage
232 permits. '12
233 Under the State Water Application Law, MDE is the only agency that may restrict water
234 usage in Maryland. We believe MDE should continue to be the only authority in this area.
235 Local governments should not be allowed to regulate water usage. Agricultural water use
236 should continue to be exempt from usage control. '04
237 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture's right to use water for irrigation.
238 '04
239 We encourage MDE to streamline the agricultural water withdrawal permit process to
240 provide more timely approval. '08
241 Under MDE's water withdrawal permit, a farmer who uses less water than allocated for
242 a given month/year should not be penalized and should not receive a lower water allocation.
243 '15
244 When a water appropriation permit hearing is requested by an interested party, MDE
245 should require the interested party to be in attendance during the hearing. If the requesting
246 party fails to appear, the hearing should be dismissed. '15
247 We request MDE use "irrigated inches per acre" rather than "gallons per day" when
248 formulating water appropriation permits. '15
249 Surface water screening devices should not be required on man-made irrigation ponds.
250 '14
251 We urge the state government to designate pond/river screening devices be eligible for
252 cost share. '18

AIR QUALITY

255 Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of
256 air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when
257 considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. '18
258 We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean
259 air (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in
260 reducing equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. '18
261 We support a healthy environment, including good air quality, but we are opposed to
262 emission control rules and standards for farm equipment that would require the retrofiting of
263 our equipment to meet those standards. '18
264 We oppose exhaust emissions from farm machinery along with dust and particulate
265 matter generated from agricultural activity being subject to the federal Clean Air standards
266 instituted in 1997. '18
267 We oppose regulations dealing with exhaust of ammonia or methane gases from
268 agricultural activities. '18
269 We recommend MDE allow the burning of agricultural use buildings. Buildings to be
270 burned should meet safety standards for burning set by county codes. Burning should be
271 supervised by the local fire company. '18
272 We encourage MDA to assemble an ag air quality expert panel with the mission to
273 review, vet and validate regional ag emissions research & publications to ensure pertinence to
274 real world conditions. This panel should consist, at minimum of the MD & DE state
275 climatologists, MD & DE extension animal science specialists and representatives from the dairy
276 and poultry associations. '18
277 We oppose the creation of a state carbon and/or Greenhouse Gas reduction tax/fee. '18

278 We Oppose requiring CAFO's to install air quality monitoring devices. '18
279 We support air quality monitoring data be managed by University of Maryland
280 Extension. '18

281

282

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

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

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

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

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

292

293

ALCOHOL PRODUCTION – ON FARM

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

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

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

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

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

309 We support wineries', farm breweries' and farm distilleries' rights to market their
310 product as broadly and as widely as possible, including in "Farmer's Markets" listed by the
311 Department of Agriculture under annual permits issued by the Office of the Comptroller. '15

312 We support research and funding in cooperation with MDA and UMD that enhances the
313 viability of commercial viticulture, on farm brewing and distilling in Maryland. '15

314 We support brewers' right to supply spent grain to local farmers. '15

315 We support the inclusion of the inventory of grape, hop and brewery grain production in
316 the state in future MDA and NASS agricultural statistical surveys. '15

317

318

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS

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

322 We support continuing research and development of alternate and renewable energy
323 resources. '18

324 We strongly urge the local, state and federal government agencies to support new
325 alternative Ag enterprises to provide assistance in market development; and, to provide
326 education so that new enterprises can become viable sources of income in agriculture. '18
327 We recommend Maryland replace consumer plastic bags with biodegradable plastic
328 bags. '19

329

330

ANIMAL CARE

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

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

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

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

340 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in
341 educating the food industry, school children, the general public and those elected to represent
342 us in government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,
343 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated
344 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.
345 '18

346 We support the right of farmers to protect their livestock and poultry from predatory
347 animals and birds. '19

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

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

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

Antibiotic Feed Additives

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

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

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

362

363

ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES

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

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

368 A strong animal health program needs to be supported by the state. We support full
369 accreditation of Maryland's Animal Health Labs at Salisbury and Frederick. With bio-security

370 and agri-terrorism concerns and to support the well-being of Maryland’s livestock industries, it
371 is crucial that the laboratory services are upgraded for rapid and accurate disease diagnosis. ’09

372
373

AQUACULTURE

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

380 We support the Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council’s recommendations that
381 provide science-based guidance on how aquaculture should be managed ’16

382
383

AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD

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

388
389

BEEKEEPING

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

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

397 We support the planting of pollinator habitat as long as the habitat is not a noxious or
398 invasive species of plants ’15

399
400

BROWNFIELDS

401 We support incentives and liability protections to encourage new enterprises to utilize
402 former industrial sites as a means of reducing sprawl. ’07

403 We support incentives to encourage the redevelopment of former residential and
404 commercial properties as a means of reducing sprawl. ’03

405
406

CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

407 We oppose regulations that put farmers who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed at a
408 competitive disadvantage. States within the Bay Watershed should act as a cohesive unit when
409 implementing regulations or practices in order to avoid creating a competitive disadvantage to
410 one or more states. ’13

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

441 We support the allowance of tax credits to be sold through a broker system based on
442 the current income tax subtraction modification for the purchasing of conservation equipment
443 '15

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

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

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

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

452 **Storm water Management Regulations and Fees**

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

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

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

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

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

465 Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and the Total Maximum Daily Load
466 (TMDL) for the Bay and its tributaries will place an unfair economic disadvantage on farms in
467 the Bay watershed as compared to farms elsewhere. As the percentage of nutrient load from
468 urban areas continues to increase, it would be inequitable for agriculture to be burdened with
469 excessive offsets and trading. We ask that cost vs. benefit be carefully considered in all debate
470 on environmental policies. No programs should be implemented without a financial impact
471 study being done. Government should direct actions that are the best that can be achieved
472 within reasonable limits to reduce impacts to the Bay. '19

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

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

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

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

484

485 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

486 **Farmers' Markets**

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

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

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

493 We oppose the use of title "Farmers' Market" for a store that is not truly a Farmers'
494 Market. We urge Maryland to adopt a law similar to the one invoked in Maine to define how
495 and when the term Farmers' Market may be used. '19

496 **Grain Dealers**

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

502 **Labeling Requirements**

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

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

507 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

508 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise.
509 We urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's

510 efforts to improve marketing services. We support the “Maryland’s Best” marketing
511 program.’12

512 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that
513 serve all citizens.’07

514 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Economic Development to
515 continue its policy of providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural
516 industries.’06

517 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of
518 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities. ’13

519 We support state grants and financial support for local co-ops, marketing and food
520 processing facilities. ’18

521 **Deep Water Terminal**

522 We support a viable grain export terminal.’07

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

525 **Roadside Markets**

526 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural
527 products.’06

528 We encourage the enforcement of existing county zoning laws related to farmers’
529 markets and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer
530 merchants and/or non-local merchants. ’10

531 **Roadside Signs**

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

535 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

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

538 **Value Added**

539 We support the development of a statewide value-added processing system. ’09

540

541

541 **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

542 **Best Management Practices**

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

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

550 Interpretation and definition of Best Management Practices (BMPs) must recognize the
551 economic impact and cost to the farmer. ’17

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

555 Farmers and landowners shall be allowed to install culverts in non-blue line ditches to
556 increase the accessibility of their land. ’17

557 **Conservation Practices**

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

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

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

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

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

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

576 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

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

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

582 We propose changes to the CREP that are intended to keep prime land available for
583 production, reduce the economic incentive to take whole farms or major portions thereof out
584 of production, to remove the government as a primary cash rent competitor for valuable
585 agricultural land and to provide for more effective maintenance of land under CREP contract.
586 '17

587 Our proposed changes include the following:

- 588 (1) CREP contracts should be issued only on land that has a scientifically supported impact
589 on water quality. CREP should not be used to create wildlife habitat where water quality
590 benefit is negligible. '17
- 591 (2) Buffers should be variable, with a maximum width of 100 feet, based on topographical
592 and soil conditions to ensure water quality benefits and minimize loss of productive
593 cropland. '17
- 594 (3) Buffers established adjacent to ditches should have a maximum width of 50 feet and
595 should be smaller if prime and productive soils are impacted. Buffers should not include
596 trees within 35 feet of a ditch in order to facilitate maintenance of the ditch. The practice
597 of digging ditches just to enroll the entire acreage on farms should be prohibited. '17
- 598 (4) Regulations should be developed to require weed control on all land subject to a CREP
599 contract. The maintenance and control rules should be enforced. '17
- 600 (5) Mowing of CREP lands should be required annually if weeds cannot be controlled by
601 other means. Weeds of primary concern to adjacent farmers include, but are not limited
602 to: giant ragweed, multiflora rose, burr cucumber, phragmites, autumn olive, mile-a-
603 minute, and kudzu, scrub trees and noxious grasses. '17

604 (6) Rental rates for future CREP contracts should be adjusted to provide for a sliding-scale
605 that pays more for land immediately adjacent to water and less for land closer to prime
606 and productive soils. Rates should be in line with local rental rates. '17
607 We urge federal, state and local agencies to conduct field inspections on CREP contracts
608 that include noxious weed compliance. If landowners are not in compliance with the contract,
609 agencies should work with landowners to gain compliance. '17
610 USDA landlord/tenant rules should be strictly enforced to prevent losses to farmers who
611 have already invested resources into land being considered for a CREP contract. '17
612 Upon re-enrollment of land under a CREP contract, a farm should not be required to
613 destroy existing vegetation and replant as long as the existing CREP land has been properly
614 maintained and will meet the water quality and erosion control goals of the program. '17
615

616 **COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS**

617 **Cover Crop Program**

618 The cover crop program administered by MDA should remain a voluntary cost-share
619 program and should be amended as follows:
620 (1) It should be made permanent. '07
621 (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs '10
622 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '17
623 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is
624 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
625 (5) Farmers should receive the same cover crop payment for manure incorporated land that
626 they would be paid for no till land, due to new manure incorporation requirements. '13
627 (6) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain
628 crops and hay acreage. '07
629 (7) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
630 (8) It should allow flexible planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '13
631 (9) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast
632 seeding. '07
633 (10) Aerial seeding should be funded as all other methods of seeding and should not exclude
634 double crop acres. '14
635 (11) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it
636 on the farm. '18
637 (12) The annual signup date for the program should be from June 1st through September 1st.
638 '12
639 (13) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested
640 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09
641 (14) Fields should be allowed to contain blends of different cover crops as long as a nitrogen
642 scavenger crop is included in the blends. This should include the addition of legumes to such
643 blends. '12
644 (15) Change seeding rates mandated for the cereal species that currently exist to be in
645 accordance with current University of Maryland Extension research findings. '12
646 (16) Give the option to adjust seeding rates and planting methods to facilitate late season
647 termination, green planting, intercropping or relay cropping as an alternative to cover crop
648 burndown. '16
649 (17) Seeding rate should be calculated using germination rate and size of seed to achieve a
650 number of viable seeds per acre. '17

651 (18) Add sorghum to the eligible standing crops that the \$10 bonus aerial application for cover
652 crop can be seeded into. '19

653 (19) Recommend that MDA issue the first cover crop split payment before December 15th and
654 any final payments within 15 days after the crop termination report has been submitted. '19

655 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program.
656 '10

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

659 **Cost Share Programs**

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

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

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

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

668 We recommend that the State fund the MACS program with General Obligation Bonds.
669 '17

670

671 **CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

685

686 **CROP PROTECTION**

687 We urge keeping all federally labeled crop protection products legal in the state,
688 counties and municipalities. '19

689 We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them
690 by approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '19

691 In order to help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to
692 maintain a biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old
693 chemicals, chemical containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '19

694 We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned
695 chemicals. '19

696 Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water
697 contaminated by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to
698 label instructions. '19

699 Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not
700 on emotional issues. '19

701 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The
702 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an
703 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to
704 farm his property. '19

705 We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to
706 aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '19

707 We oppose the collection and distribution of pesticide use data beyond that collected in
708 the USDA NASS survey. '19

709 We oppose the establishment of a pesticide use data reporting system that would make
710 information available to the general public or to "interested" researchers. '19

711 **Disease Prevention & Pest Control**

712 We support the monitoring of plant diseases such as Asian Soybean Rust in the exotic
713 plants used by homeowners and landscapers that may include invasive weed species that serve
714 as alternate hosts. We urge MDA to study these plant species and bolster its efforts to assure
715 that all new plants have no negative impact on farm crops or nursery stock. '19

716 We support existing restrictions on the movement of Ash trees to prevent the spread of
717 the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. '19

718 We support funding for joint research by universities to study and eliminate the Brown
719 Marmorated Stink Bug. '19

720 **Environmental Surcharge**

721 We are opposed to any state tax or surcharge on fertilizers and crop protectants to fund
722 environmental programs. '19

723 **Pesticide Stewardship**

724 We support participating in a Pesticide Stewardship Education program with MDA,
725 Extension and other commodity groups for educational outreach geared towards consumers. '19

726

727

DAIRY INDUSTRY

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

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

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

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

737 **Milk Marketing**

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

740 '17

741 Milk is a liquid produced by the mammary glands of mammals, and only products
742 meeting this definition should be permitted to be labeled, advertised and sold in Maryland as
743 milk '17
744 All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as "raw milk" only. '17
745 We believe schools should not provide milk to students after the sell-by date. '17
746 We support placing milk vending machines in all schools. '17
747 We urge Maryland Public Schools to remove skim milk for the food options and replace
748 with no less than 2% milk. '18
749 We urge Maryland Public Schools to add a minimum of 1% flavored milk to the food
750 options. '18

751
752 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

753 We oppose new or increased fees for dairy farmers, haulers and cooperatives. '17
754 We support current Maryland Law for the prohibition of raw milk sales. We support
755 legislation that would prohibit the use of cattle-share or farm-share agreements as a means to
756 circumvent existing raw milk sales laws. '17

757
758 **DREDGE SPOIL**

759 We support the dredging of Baltimore Harbor, which would improve ship traffic and
760 benefit the state's economy.'07
761 When deposit sites are needed, dredge spoil shall be used to replenish low areas that
762 were once highland that are now wet or have eroded away. '05
763 We oppose dumping of dredge spoils into open water. '14

764
765 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

766 We support a voluntary conservation habitat reserve program that would provide
767 incentives for landowners to establish and maintain habitat for endangered species.'05
768 Compensation shall be provided for landowners where use of the land is restricted by
769 the Endangered Species Act.'07
770 We urge the state to eliminate from the list those species (threatened or endangered)
771 that might have limited numbers in Maryland but are common elsewhere.'06
772 Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal
773 law. '07
774 Any plant or animal that is taken as a result of an agricultural practice shall be
775 considered an incidental taking. '07
776 We support the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reassess and possibly
777 remove the Delmarva Fox Squirrel from the endangered species list. '12

778
779 **ENERGY POLICY**

780 We strongly support a comprehensive, long-term energy policy that fully utilizes
781 domestic energy resources and aggressively promotes the role of agriculture. '19
782 We support an increase in off-shore and land-based drilling for oil and natural gas to
783 enhance supplies, lower prices and reduce dependence on foreign sources. '19
784 We strongly support the development of shale gas in Maryland. '19
785 We urge that farm rates and demand charges be comparable across electric providers.
786 '19

787 **Ethanol & Bio-Diesel Fuel**

788 We support an energy independence and efficiency policy to include: (1) site approval,
789 environmental issues, funding and approval of renewable energy sources; (2) the use of
790 renewable fuels in county, state and federal automobile fleets; (3) support for the construction
791 of ethanol and biofuels plants in Maryland; and (4) support for production and use incentives
792 for ethanol and biodiesel. '19

793 We urge the use of some ethanol in gasoline and soy diesel in diesel fuel. '19

794 We urge research and education on the use of ethanol in all engines at 10 percent and
795 higher blends to ensure we meet the Renewable Fuel Standard goal of 36 billion gallons of
796 renewable fuel use by 2025. '19

797 We urge new research to improve ethanol compatibility with farm equipment. '19

798 We urge that all state and county government vehicles (including school buses) be
799 required to use bio diesel or ethanol fuels. '19

800 We encourage the maritime industries to use bio-diesel fuel on the Chesapeake Bay and
801 in other Maryland waterways. '19

802 We strongly believe that public officials need to seriously consider the opportunities and
803 potential for increasing local or domestic demand of commodities through the production of
804 Ethanol E-85. '19

805 We recommend that the Maryland Department of Transportation make changes to
806 guidelines so that current E85 (85% blend gasoline/ethanol) models may be used in fleets to
807 meet alternative fuel mandates. '19

808 We urge the support of government agencies such as the Department of Business &
809 Economic Development (DBED) in the development of bio-fuels in Maryland. '19

810 **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

811 We encourage research, development and utilization of alternative energy sources from
812 methane, biomass, wind, nuclear, solar, hydrogen, hydro and clean natural gas. '19

813 Additionally, we urge that this process be aided by appropriate government tax
814 incentives. '19

815 We support energy generation from poultry litter and livestock manure to be
816 considered value-added production on a farm. '19

817 We support initiatives to generate heat & electricity from timber resources. '19

818 We support the use of on-farm wind and solar energy production to provide electric
819 energy for the farm and to be sold to the energy grid. We encourage state and county
820 governments to provide regulatory support and encouragement for wind generators and
821 turbines to help offset farm energy costs. '19

822 We oppose commercial solar energy facilities being considered as an agricultural activity
823 and receiving the same exemptions as an agricultural structure or agland. This would also
824 include receiving the agricultural tax assessment. '19

825 We oppose the use of "farm" when referring to an alternative energy generation facility.
826 '19

827 We oppose the State of Maryland preemption of local and county land use policy for
828 renewable energy generation projects. '19

829 We support removing large scale commercial solar energy generating facilities from the
830 RPS carve-out for solar energy. '19

831 We do not support commercial solar energy facilities being built on prime and
832 productive farmland specifically priority preservation areas. '19

833 We encourage that brownfields, and urban areas be utilized to assist with the clean
834 energy mandate in lieu of prime and productive farmland '19
835 Commercial energy facilities should have appropriate riparian buffer and setback
836 requirements. '16

837 **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

838 Outdoor wood fired boilers/furnaces that utilize approved emission control systems and
839 EPA best burn practices for Hydronic heaters should be allowed. '19

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

841 We support an additional carve-out in the Maryland RPS for poultry litter and livestock
842 manure to energy generation. '19

843 We oppose any % increase to the RPS if it causes an increase to the electric rates of the
844 consumer. '19

845 We oppose any additional increases to the solar carve out in the RPS unless projects are
846 two megawatts or smaller. '19

847

848 **ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING**

849 We urge changes to "standing law" so that no farmer who is in compliance with
850 applicable law could be sued by a third party. '12

851

852 **EQUINE INDUSTRY**

853 We support the inclusion of inventories of the various classes of equine in the state in
854 future MDA and NASS agriculture statistical surveys. '18

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

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

860 We support the creation of incentives to horse owners to work with the Ag agencies
861 that offer technical assistance for implementing conservation and best management practices.
862 '18

863

864 **FAMILY VALUES**

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

870

871 **FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES**

872 We recommend that the State FSA Administration grant more power to the county
873 committees to adequately staff county offices. '07

874 We recommend more farmer input on FSA office closures before any implementation
875 occurs. '05

876 We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and
877 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 afforesting, 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. ’19

We support a House of Delegates apportioned on population with a minimum of one delegate per county. ’19

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. ’19

We urge local control in the selections of those responsible for operating our local court systems. ’19

925 **Ethics**

926 We support a change in current State law to allow farmers to become eligible for
927 employment by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '19

928 **Government Spending**

929 We urge the reduction of government agency bureaucracy and duplication in an effort
930 to reduce costs, fees and frustration of the general public. '19

931 We urge all levels of government to operate within a balanced budget. '19

932 We oppose any state food policy that limits, impairs, restricts or bans the purchase of
933 agricultural commodities produced in Maryland by State or Local agencies and institutions. '19

934 We encourage State and Local agencies and institutions to purchase all types of
935 Maryland agricultural commodities and products. '19

936 **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

937 We strongly oppose consolidation or transfer of any of MDA's current programs,
938 functions or authorities to any other department. We strongly support the transfer of any and
939 all ag-related programs, functions and authorities from other departments to MDA. '19

940 We urge the MDA to establish official standardized office hours for all department
941 offices including field offices. '19

942 **Regulatory Reform**

943 We strongly recommend that any new policy or regulation proposed affecting land
944 management, nutrient management, environmental programs or enforcement be required to
945 include an economic impact study to evaluate the effect on vested persons. This shall be
946 performed as part of the developmental process for each regulation and policy. '19

947 We strongly recommend that the farm community continue to be consulted and be
948 allowed to participate in the formulation of regulations and laws at all levels of government
949 particularly when they adversely impact the Ag community. '19

950 Agencies developing regulations should seek additional input from agricultural
951 stakeholders. '19

952 We strongly recommend all government agencies develop regulations in cooperation
953 with other agencies so that there is a reduction in duplication and a consistency of purpose. '19

954 We ask for removal of the question on Maryland's death certificate in bold print, "Did
955 tobacco use contribute to the cause of death, YES { } NO { } UNCERTAIN { }?" '19

956 Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said
957 regulations. '19

958 We *strongly* recommend that all State agencies review their rules and regulations that
959 affect the agriculture industry and modify and/or eliminate those that are outdated or serve no
960 purpose. '19

961 Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and
962 scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry
963 industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All
964 regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis. '19

965 The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR)
966 Committee should have the authority to prevent a proposed regulation from being
967 implemented. The Committee should be able to refer controversial proposals to the full
968 General Assembly for a vote or for amendment before an agency can implement the proposed
969 regulation. '19

970 **State and Local Agencies**

971 We support mental health programs and services to the Agricultural Community that
972 provide education and information on where to obtain mental health services. '19

973 We support the co-location of Ag agencies, Ag education and resources in regional Ag
974 centers when feasible. '19

975 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '19

976 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
977 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the
978 Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict
979 the access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on
980 private property to no greater than is allowed to law enforcement agencies. '19

981 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
982 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
983 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate
984 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
985 practices. '19

986 **State Owned Farmland**

987 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
988 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
989 converted to conservation uses. '19

990 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

991 In light of the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension
992 program to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the
993 present state pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '19

994

995 **GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

996 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We
997 recognize the value of urban greenways, but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural
998 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with
999 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or
1000 rails to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that
1001 adjoins the proposed greenway before a study commences.'07

1002 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any
1003 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the
1004 opportunity for input. Also, the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail
1005 use on the safety, health, security, privacy and economic interests of the adjacent landowners
1006 and determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail
1007 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,
1008 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use
1009 of the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for
1010 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers.'10

1011

1012 **GYPSY MOTH CONTROL**

1013 We recommend that the state gypsy moth control program be maintained at a 250 egg
1014 masses per acre baseline. '18

1015

1016 **INSURANCE**

1017 **Crop Insurance**

1018 We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a
1019 tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. '07

1020 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

1021 Health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-
1022 employed individuals. '13

1023 We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated
1024 health insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits in an attempt to better manage
1025 health insurance costs. '05

1026 We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge
1027 the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of
1028 quality health care. '13

1029 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent
1030 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.'06

1031 We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits
1032 to long-term care insurance. '10

1033 **Insurance Rates**

1034 We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates
1035 throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on
1036 experience ratings. '05

1037 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry as a
1038 result of claims that are considered "Act of God" incidents. '16

1039
1040 **JOHNE'S DISEASE**

1041 We acknowledge that the Maryland Department of Agriculture has made progress with
1042 the John's program and request continued support for it. '05

1043
1044 **LABOR STANDARDS**

1045 We oppose overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. '14

1046 We support maximum opportunities for youth to work on farms. We believe youth gain
1047 important life skills, learn safety around animals and equipment, benefit from involvement in
1048 programs like 4-H and FFA, become interested in careers in agriculture, better understand that
1049 farmers are professionals and use best management practices, and establish a strong work
1050 ethic. Therefore, we urge government not to limit these opportunities. '12

1051
1052 **LAND STEWARDSHIP**

1053 Realizing that stewardship of the earth is in the public interest, we support the
1054 recognition of agriculture as a proper and environmentally sound use of our land resources. '06

1055
1056 **LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING**

1057 **Annexation**

1058 Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations
1059 within the county. '05

1060 **Growth Management**

1061 We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations
1062 within our state. '11

1063 We oppose any state policy that overrides county planning and zoning authority. '12
1064 We oppose the premise of Plan Maryland and urge the state to slow down the process
1065 for considering it to give counties and citizens time to thoroughly review the plan. Any
1066 benchmarks and/or consequences established must be clearly defined and the final plan should
1067 be subject to approval by the General Assembly prior to implementation.'11

1068 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.
1069 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural
1070 counties. '08

1071 We believe no program (or parts of a program) should be adopted until we review and
1072 evaluate the accumulative impact of all of our present programs. We need to know the inter-
1073 relationship of all the legislation and regulations dealing with growth management such as the
1074 Chesapeake Bay critical area law; the Nontidal Wetland Protection Act; federal, state, and local
1075 resource protection programs; the agricultural land preservation program; Program Open
1076 Space; and the reforestation law passed by the General Assembly. '05

1077 We support a requirement for local governments to consider the impact of new
1078 development on water resources and current users. Development should not be allowed to
1079 surpass the level of water resources. '07

1080 Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's
1081 property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '06

1082 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).
1083 '10

1084 **Permitting**

1085 We support the continued exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building
1086 permits and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the zoning code. We further
1087 support the inclusion of specific language in the building code to permit public access to
1088 existing, structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated upgrades to the full
1089 current codes. '05

1090 **Reverse Set-backs & Buffers**

1091 We urge elected officials and county planners to require protective measures for
1092 farmland, such as reverse setbacks, buffers, fencing, etc. for new non-agricultural uses
1093 occurring adjacent to existing agricultural operations. '14

1094 **Zoning**

1095 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their
1096 efforts to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners
1097 involved should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria
1098 changes. Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall
1099 provide for just compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no down zoning
1100 on agriculture land. '07

1101 Zoning regulations should be determined at the local, not state level.'08

1102 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '08

1103 Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or
1104 default. '08

1105

1106

LAW ENFORCEMENT

1107 **Penalties & Confinement**

1108 We urge the state to increase penalties for defacing and removal of "Mason-Dixon Line"
1109 markers. '05

1110 We favor adequate prison facilities so that inmates can serve their sentences. We
1111 recommend that inmates in minimum security penal complexes be required to work on
1112 highways, prison farms or other public projects to help defray the cost of their food and
1113 support and to pay restitution to their victims. We also favor emphasis on the rehabilitation of
1114 persons confined to penal institutions to afford them a better opportunity to assume a
1115 constructive role in society. '06

1116 We believe that the State of Maryland should enact legislation providing for a
1117 mandatory life sentence without parole, or a death sentence, for violent murder offenses and
1118 murder offenses occurring during the illegal transportation and/or distribution of controlled
1119 dangerous substances (drugs). '05

1120 We urge the Department of Corrections to return prisoners to their county of origin
1121 after the completion of their sentence before their release.'07

1122 We support legislation that would prevent elected officials from holding office if
1123 convicted of a crime or of misconduct in office and from receiving pensions or benefits
1124 pertaining to the office that they held.'06

1125 **Judicial Process**

1126 We recommend that the defendants be brought to a speedy trial and if convicted, given
1127 a sentence sufficient to discourage further crimes. We support consistency in judicial
1128 sentencing for all.'07

1129 We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity
1130 defense of "innocent by reason of insanity" to "guilty, but insane." '05

1131 **Investigation of Crimes**

1132 We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between
1133 jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. '07

1134 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who
1135 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.'06

1136 To deter copper thefts, we propose a mandatory waiting period between the sale and
1137 the payment for certain salvaged material. '11

1138

1139 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

1140 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law
1141 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

1142

1143 **LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS**

1144 The State of Maryland should institute policy whereby unsuccessful plaintiffs initiating
1145 litigation against farm operations in Maryland shall be liable for the defendant's legal fees and
1146 appropriate damages in the event that the defendant prevails in the course of the suit.'12

1147 **Contributory Negligence**

1148 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock
1149 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a
1150 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's
1151 responsible actions. '04

1152 **Agricultural Immunity,**

1153 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '06

1154 We support immunity from liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers to afford
1155 the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '14

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LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

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

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY

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

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

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

LOCAL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING

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

MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP

We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow hemp as an agricultural crop. '19

We oppose the production and sale of recreational marijuana. '19

MOSQUITO CONTROL

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

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

1203 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should
1204 be deemed “the taking of private property” and the landowner should be “justly
1205 compensated.” ‘08

1206 Maryland regulations should not be more stringent than the federal regulations
1207 regarding non-tidal wetlands in agricultural land. ‘08

1208 We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that
1209 they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of
1210 public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost
1211 of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. ‘08

1212 We urge local control of regulations and permits limiting the use of wetlands.’07

1213

1214

NOXIOUS WEEDS

Noxious Weed List

1216 We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, kudzu,
1217 multi-flora rose (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry), Japanese stiltgrass,
1218 Palmer Amaranth and Asiatic tearthumb (mile-a-minute vine) placed on the noxious weed list.
1219 ‘18

1220 We urge the SHA to submit a realistic fiscal impact statement related to adding palmer
1221 amaranth to the noxious weed list. ‘18

1222

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

1224 We insist that local, county, state, federal governments, and public utilities control
1225 invasive species and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by
1226 them. ‘18

1227 We urge FSA and NRCS to educate private landowners about invasive species of weeds
1228 and control methods before and during the contract period. ‘18

Enforcement

1230 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the
1231 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,
1232 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA’s
1233 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. ‘18

1234 We recommend increasing the funding to provide proper enforcement of the noxious
1235 weed law and maintain a viable education, prevention and treatment program. ‘18

1236 We recommend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators
1237 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are
1238 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1239 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1240 non-crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all of the control methods outlined by the
1241 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: “mowing, spraying and cultivation.” ‘18

1242 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1243 conservation programs so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1244 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. ‘18

1245 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop procedures for adding
1246 new weeds to the noxious weed list. These procedures should include an estimate of the cost
1247 to control the weed. ‘18

1248 **Public Education**

1249 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1250 general public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of noxious
1251 weeds. '18

1252 **Weed Control Methods**

1253 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1254 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and
1255 eliminate these noxious weeds. '18

1256 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious
1257 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will
1258 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination. '18

1259 We support the state providing cost share for control of noxious weeds and other weeds
1260 of concern. '18

1261 We support counties and the state to work with HOAs, Forest Conservation Easements
1262 and Storm Water Management Areas to control their noxious weeds and weeds of concern. '18

1263 **Weeds of Concern**

1264 We urge MDA in cooperation with University of Maryland Extension to create a weeds
1265 of concern program that identifies new or herbicide resistant weeds of concern, educates state
1266 agencies, land owners and farmers on how to identify and manage these weeds, and
1267 encourages state agencies, land owners and farmers to implement best management practices
1268 to control these weeds. '18

1269

1270

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

1271 **Nutrient Management for Farms**

1272 We believe in a voluntary nutrient management program and that all farmers should
1273 apply nutrients in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound
1274 science. '07

1275 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of
1276 nutrient management plans. '09

1277 We support a nutrient management program that: (1) produces real water quality
1278 improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3) requires reasonable recordkeeping,
1279 (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5) provides adequate flexibility for
1280 farmers to properly manage their operations, (6) provides appropriate inspection and
1281 enforcement, and (7) provides appropriate incentives to offset operating and capital costs
1282 incurred by complying with the requirements of the program. '12

1283 We are opposed to the changes to the nutrient management regulations, which make
1284 MD agriculture less competitive by increasing the cost and difficulty of farming in Maryland
1285 without compensation. '13

1286 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.
1287 '10

1288 We recommend that MDA and the University of Maryland review and update the
1289 nitrogen use recommendations in UMD's Numan Pro software program, which is used for
1290 nutrient management plans. '18

1291 We recommend the composting of animals be an approved method of disposing of
1292 animal mortalities on the farm. '17

1293 The state should not expand the Phosphorus Management Tool as long as the
1294 agricultural community is on track to meet the 2025 WIP clean-up goal. '18

1295 We support delaying the full implementation of the Phosphorus Management Tool until
1296 the science behind the tool is validated. '19

1297 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient
1298 management program to achieve the following:

- 1299 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- 1300 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.
1301 '05
- 1302 c. Prevent yield capping. '05
- 1303 d. Allow the use of scientifically valid nutrient recommendations from the University of
1304 Maryland or other public and private sources. '18
- 1305 e. The elimination of the Nutrient Management Voucher requirements and the transfer of
1306 the resultant savings to Extension for nutrient management plan writing. '10
- 1307 f. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12
- 1308 g. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on
1309 an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14
- 1310 h. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and
1311 technologies. '18

1312 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a
1313 farm based on a complaint. '09

1314 We support the continuation of the farmer-filed annual certification of plan compliance
1315 along with an annual summary of nutrient application rather than requiring the filing of the
1316 completed plan. '06

1317 MDA should develop an optional on-line reporting system for the annual summaries. '09

1318 **Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality**

1319 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain
1320 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately-written nutrient
1321 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government
1322 entity. '10

1323 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date, they should
1324 be properly destroyed. '08

1325 **Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education**

1326 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1327 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '13

1328 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**

1329 We seek full funding for Nutrient Management Cost-Share for the development and
1330 updating of nutrient management plans by private industry and by University of Maryland
1331 Extension. All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '12

1332 We request that funding for nutrient management education and plan development go
1333 directly to University of Maryland Extension in order to hire and maintain adequate permanent
1334 nutrient management advisors in each county. '10

1335 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1336 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1337 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1338 We strongly oppose the Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised
1339 Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by MDE. '12

1340 We oppose public hearings for CAFO permit renewals that do not include facility
1341 expansion or modification. '16

1342 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1343 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1344 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '11

1345 We strongly oppose any fee structure for reviewing or inspecting MAFO or CAFO
1346 operation by MDE '14

1347 We support transferring the MAFO permitting program from MDE to MDA while
1348 decoupling the NPDES permitting process from the MAFO permit. '17

1349 **Manure and Litter Management**

1350 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for
1351 crop production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '15

1352 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.

1353 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies – beyond those previously conducted by
1354 UMD researchers – that include different soil types, locations and manure types before any ban
1355 on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1356 Universities within the Bay Watershed should collaboratively research the benefits of
1357 organic nutrients vs. commercial fertilizer on leachable soil types and soils with high water
1358 tables. '13

1359 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1360 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1361 We support diversion of manure from Equine operations from going to county landfills.

1362 We encourage government funding of composting facilities. '18

1363 We oppose being required to field stack mushroom soil compost. '18

1364 **Soil Testing**

1365 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1366 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '13

1367

1368 **NUTRIENT TRADING**

1369 We oppose any form of government mandated and controlled trading for the
1370 compliance for nutrient reductions from point sources of nutrient loading in lieu of Biological
1371 Nutrient Reduction (BNR) upgrading or delaying of any sewage treatment facility upgrades. '10

1372 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient reduction that allow farmers to receive
1373 fair compensation for nutrient removal and/or reductions. '16

1374 We support allowing Shellfish/Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for
1375 Maryland to meet its water quality goals. '16

1376 We oppose using the wastewater treatment plant's portion of the flush tax dollars to
1377 jump start a Maryland nutrient trading program. '16

1378

1379 **POULTRY INDUSTRY**

1380 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter.
1381 '17

1382 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a
1383 cost-share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the
1384 mandatory covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '17

1385 We oppose any effort to mandate moving poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '17

1386 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy
1387 generation. '17

1388 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1389 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere
1390 in the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '17

1391 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research-based guidelines for field
1392 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1393 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '17

1394 We oppose government regulations that would require chicken grower/poultry
1395 company layout policies. '17

1396 We support Delmarva Poultry Industry's (DPI) best management practices for good
1397 neighbor relations, which cover house location on property, manure handling practices, carcass
1398 disposal system, vegetative buffers, odor prevention & control, and contact with neighbors. '17

1399 We oppose state mandated air quality monitoring or air filtering on poultry houses over
1400 and above DPI's best management practices for good neighbor relations. '17

1401

1402 **PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1403 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1404 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner.'07

1405 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production
1406 of an agricultural commodity on farmland. '07

1407 We oppose any mandatory retirement of land for buffers and setbacks. '12

1408 Government action that diminishes a property's value or an owner's right to use his
1409 property constitutes a taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should
1410 provide due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been
1411 diminished. The just basis for compensation must be at least fair market value. '14

1412 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and
1413 state levels. '07

1414 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the
1415 party disputing any property lines. '06

1416 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to
1417 notify all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified
1418 letter, in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '11

1419 **Eminent Domain**

1420 We believe the Supreme Court "Kelo" decision violates the basic principles and
1421 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1422 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1423 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet.
1424 We believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land
1425 and then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage
1426 of legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1427 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop.
1428 '06

1429 We urge the elimination of the "quick take" condemnation process. '12

1430 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1431 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1432 property.'10

1433 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.

1434 '06

1435 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for
1436 the purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original
1437 landowner or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other
1438 than for which it was originally acquired. '05

1439 We urge that the compensation must include the total devaluation of the farm due to
1440 the negative impact, including visual, of any eminent domain project. '17

1441

1442

PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS

1443 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1444 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of parkland being purchased in this
1445 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1446 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1447 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to
1448 use part or all of their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1449 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1450 '15

1451 We urge Program Open Space revenues that were diverted to the General Fund to be
1452 repaid. '14

1453 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1454 present parkland rather than the acquisition of new land.'06

1455 We urge that the open space program continue to receive 0.5% of the Maryland real
1456 estate transfer tax. '15

1457

1458

PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS

1459 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1460 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding.'07

1461 Also, we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property
1462 owners of the easement rights of the PDA.'06

1463 We oppose any effort to usurp control of PDA maintenance from the PDA managers.
1464 Any federal, state, or private conservation practices should not prevent, hinder or interfere
1465 with the maintenance of the PDA main, tributary or right of way. '18

1466

1467

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

1468 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1469 present to the general public of the state. We urge the State and County Health Departments
1470 to gather as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs and
1471 treatment of these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this
1472 information. '06

1473 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1474 problem in order to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state. '06

1475 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1476 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

1477

1478

PUBLIC OWNED LAND

1479 Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in
1480 production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '18

1481 We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to
1482 acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to
1483 parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by
1484 willing sellers only. '18

1485 In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the
1486 governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges and wild lands to
1487 determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate
1488 the sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '18

1489 The state should compensate counties for the loss of property tax revenue on public
1490 lands. '18

1491 We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or
1492 other recreational uses in an effort to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and
1493 administering these lands. '18

1494 We urge the state to require and implement a wildlife management plan for all public,
1495 wild and forest land. '18

1496 **Timberland Management**

1497 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use
1498 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting
1499 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '18

1500

1501 **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1502 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome and most affordable food in the
1503 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the
1504 media unless substantiated and accurate. '08

1505 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.
1506 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based
1507 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors and
1508 subsequent retailers. '08

1509 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and
1510 information regarding the local farm community. '08

1511 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the
1512 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland
1513 agriculture to the public through various media outlets. '08

1514 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that
1515 would:

- 1516 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1517 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1518 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the
1519 environment.
- 1520 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals and educational displays.
- 1521 5. Include a speaker's bureau. '08

1522 We encourage state, county and local government officials to take a more active role in
1523 supporting, promoting and defending agriculture. '09

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RAILROADS

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

RECYCLING

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

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

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

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

Tire Fund & Tire Recycling

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

RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS

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

1570 We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by
1571 law-abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, long arm, autoloader or manual loader.
1572 Furthermore, we are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition. '15
1573

1574 **RIGHT-TO-FARM**

1575 To maintain the right to farm, we recognize our individual responsibility as farmers to
1576 help maintain the positive image of the ag industry by being respectful and courteous
1577 neighbors. '19

1578 We support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect the
1579 privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce without
1580 undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations or harassment from government or the private
1581 sector. We support actions to ensure that farmers are protected from undue liability and
1582 nuisance suits when carrying out normal production practices. '05

1583 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland "Right-to-Farm" Law but believe that it should
1584 be strengthened. '05

1585 We support an amendment to Maryland's Constitution recognizing that agriculture,
1586 which provides food, energy, health benefits, and security, is the foundation and stabilizing
1587 force of Maryland's economy. To protect this vital sector of Maryland's economy, the right of
1588 farmers to engage in farming practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state. '14

1589 We recommend that right-to-farm laws extend to the ag-supported industry, i.e.
1590 equipment dealers, grain and feed storage, processing, etc. We also urge that it be evaluated
1591 and amended if necessary, to make sure that the use of scare guns (for crop protection) is
1592 allowed. '11

1593 Before entering into the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the
1594 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review in an attempt to settle
1595 the nuisance complaint between the effected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in
1596 nuisance complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '09

1597 Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead
1598 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '07

1599 **Funding to Protect Farms**

1600 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1601 environmental suits filed against farmers. '11

1602 **Right to Repair**

1603 We support legislation requiring agricultural equipment manufacturers to make available
1604 the necessary documents, software and information to allow independent shops and individuals
1605 to repair equipment. '19

1606

1607 **RIPARIAN BUFFERS**

1608 We favor voluntary incentive-based programs for establishing riparian buffers. Grass
1609 species or natural vegetation is preferred. When forest buffers are established provisions
1610 should be made for the future harvest of such trees without penalty. '07

1611 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis. '07

1612 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1613 use. '09

1614

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

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Road Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

Road Construction

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

We oppose any additional Chesapeake Bay crossing that is not at the location of the current Bay Bridge spans. '19

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

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

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

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

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

We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land

1662 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has
1663 been initiated. '08

1664 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

1665 **Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)**

1666 We urge a change in the law to mandate the trimming of tree limbs on both new growth
1667 and existing trees for safe travel of all vehicles on roadways. '11

1668 We recommend that trees and limbs be cut back a minimum of five (5) feet from the
1669 road edge and to a height of 16 feet on the shoulder, with reflective material placed on guide
1670 wires and poles that are surrounded or at the very edge of the pavement.'05

1671 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1672 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and enhance scenic views.'12

1673 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments control invasive species
1674 and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '17

1675 The government should increase the level of maintenance to ensure safe passage of
1676 vehicles.'12

1677 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1678 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of
1679 the tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous and diseased
1680 trees.'12

1681 We highly recommend that State Highway Administration (SHA) send at least a 6-month
1682 notice to adjacent landowners whenever plantings are being proposed along SHA rights-of-way
1683 that are currently in agricultural production. '15

1684 We urge the State Highway Administration to accommodate the movement of farm
1685 equipment into fields in agricultural production when installing right of way projects. '17

1686 We strongly encourage SHA to continue to allow farming on these rights-of-way and
1687 work with farmers to find other suitable sites for plantings on adjacent land. '15

1688 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1689 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the
1690 trimming and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and
1691 simplify the permit process. '10

1692

1693

RURAL COMMUNITIES

1694 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was created
1695 to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13

1696 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
1697 county governments during the legislative session. '13

1698

1699

RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM

1700 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
1701 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
1702 Preservation Program.'06

1703 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
1704 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
1705 '07

1706

1707 **SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

1708 **School Standards**

1709 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
1710 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
1711 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all
1712 and should be enforced by the school system. '07

1713 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

1714 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging
1715 in illegal drug activity. '07

1716 **School Lunches & Farm to School Program**

1717 We support the State's Farm-to-School program and recommend funding be increased.
1718 We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote this program and
1719 purchase more locally grown products for school nutrition programs. '17

1720 **School Year**

1721 We oppose a year-round and/or a staggered school year. We encourage all local/county
1722 Boards of Education to develop a calendar that starts after Labor Day and ends no later than
1723 June 15th. '19

1724 **School Attendance Policy**

1725 Participation in agricultural activities (e.g. 4-H, FFA and the Miss County or Miss
1726 Maryland Farm Bureau Programs) should be allowed as an excused absence and should not
1727 count against the number of allowable absences set by the county school system in question.
1728 '05

1729
1730 **SEAT BELTS**

1731 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other
1732 vehicles. '16

1733
1734 **SEED TESTING**

1735 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a
1736 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider. '11

1737 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from any certified seed lab. '14

1738
1739 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

1740 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate the current regulations
1741 concerning septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue
1742 economic hardship on landowners. '06

1743 We support requiring the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) septic systems in
1744 environmentally sensitive areas where significant impact to the Bay can be demonstrated. '11

1745 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

1746 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished
1747 land value incurred by any septic legislation. '11

1748
1749 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1750 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
1751 the federal Class A standard. '07

1752 We oppose any legislation that would allow biosolids utilized on farmland to be less
1753 restrictive than the standards outlined in MDA's 2012 Nutrient Management Guidelines. While

1754 we recognize that biosolids are an excellent source of natural fertilizer, we believe it should be
1755 utilized under the same standards as farm produced natural fertilizer. '12

1756 We recommend that MDA classify dissolved air flotation (DAF) from poultry processing
1757 plant effluent as a biosolid. '19

1758 We support continued research and public education into sludge use to assure proper
1759 application rates and practices that protect farmland. '14

1760 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
1761 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability
1762 and potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be
1763 imported into Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '08

1764 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be
1765 held accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
1766 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge_by a licensed applicator. '08

1767
1768 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a
1769 composite test be taken and recorded each day.'07

1770 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
1771 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'07

1772 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
1773 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '05

1774 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
1775 that are more restrictive than State standards. '09

1776

1777

STATE DESIGNATIONS

1778 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1779 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts
1780 to change this designation. '07

1781

1782

STATE FFA

1783 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education to fund a
1784 full-time permanent position through the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF)
1785 to serve FFA youth in Maryland. This position should be field-based under the direction of the
1786 College and Career Readiness Division. '15

1787 We recommend that at least one high school in each county and Baltimore City have an
1788 agricultural curriculum program and an FFA program. '15

1789

1790

STRAY VOLTAGE

1791 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies
1792 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and
1793 livestock. '07

1794

1795

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

1796 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that
1797 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

- 1798 1. It has to be profitable for farmers. '08
- 1799 2. It must work to conserve soil, water and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08
- 1800 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08

- 1801 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08
1802 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture.
1803 '08
1804 6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency.
1805 '10
1806 7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic or regenerative farming practices. '19
1807

TAXES

Admission and Amusement Tax

1810 Agritourism activities should be exempt from admission and amusement tax. '19

Capital Gains Tax

1812 We support an exemption from the Maryland capital gains tax on any profit realized
1813 from the sale of a perpetual conservation easement. '15

Estate Tax

1815 We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland. '07

1816 We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and
1817 conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax. '12

1818 In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use
1819 value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real
1820 estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate.

1821 '06

1822 We support the position that all property used for agricultural purposes, whether it is
1823 rented to non-family members or not, shall be treated as qualified agricultural property under
1824 the provisions of Maryland estate tax law. '13

Fuel Tax

1826 We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to
1827 allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level. '10

1828 We oppose increasing the state fuel tax. '11

Income Tax

1830 Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal
1831 tax code. '10

Inheritance Tax

1833 First and foremost, we strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '04
1834 Until then, we support taxing nieces and nephews at the previous lineal tax rate on inherited
1835 property. '05

1836 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-
1837 owned agribusinesses. '05

Health Taxes

1839 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '09

Property Tax

1841 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm
1842 or agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '15

1843 We urge amending the Agriculture Use Assessment Law to prescribe a standardized
1844 formula to ensure the full value of this special assessment is not offset by other adjustments in
1845 the total property value of the assessment for farm properties with a homesite. '17

1846 We urge amending the basis for a property tax assessment appeal to include evaluating
1847 the proper application of the agriculture use assessment to the total property value. '17

1848 The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly
1849 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '08

1850 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings including tenant houses. '18

1851 We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings '12

1852 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
1853 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '06

1854 **Sales and Use Taxes**

1855 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
1856 related services from the state sales tax. '11

1857 In order to clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain Ag
1858 purchases, we recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a
1859 tax-exempt card. '08

1860 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '16

1861 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1862 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
1863 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
1864 operation or structure. '07

1865 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1866 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as
1867 general fund enhancements. '04

1868

1869

TIMBER HARVESTING

1870 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1871 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest
1872 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1873 basis. '07

1874 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state
1875 and county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1876 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '12

1877 No conservation easement should prohibit timber harvest. '14

1878

1879

TOBACCO

1880 **Master Settlement Agreement**

1881 We recommend that as the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is reviewed by the
1882 General Assembly each year the amount to be secured for the Southern Maryland farmers be at
1883 least kept at a minimum of 5% according to the original settlement agreement. '08

1884 We recommend that if the General Assembly does not secure at least 5% of the Master
1885 Settlement Agreement for Southern Maryland farmers, those farmers who accepted the
1886 conditions of the Tobacco Buyout be relieved of those restrictions in total and be able to once
1887 again produce tobacco for sale on a market basis. '13

1888 **Tobacco Industry**

1889 We urge the state to rescind the restriction on the use of tobacco barns as stated in the
1890 Tobacco Buyout Contract. '06

1891 The State Tobacco Warehouse located in Cheltenham, Maryland was built entirely using
1892 funds derived from tobacco farmers. Therefore, we urge the Maryland Department of
1893 Agriculture to always consider any agricultural use as its top priority and leasing only be
1894 considered as a secondary use. '06

1895 **Tobacco Taxes**

1896 We oppose any increase in taxes on tobacco products. '09

1897

1898

TRESPASSING

1899 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.

1900 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
1901 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
1902 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
1903 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
1904 injury sustained by trespassers. '13

1905 The maximum fine should be raised to \$5,000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
1906 destruction of property. '18

1907 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
1908 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs
1909 or paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission
1910 and to know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private
1911 land. '06

1912 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a
1913 jail term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine if a minor is convicted. The
1914 offender should be required to pay the property owner three times the amount of destruction
1915 including time loss and all court cost. '14

1916 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
1917 by others without written permission of up to \$5,000.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up
1918 to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore,
1919 violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '18

1920 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
1921 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
1922 existing laws and regulations.'07

1923 **Unmanned Aerial Systems**

1924 We request legislation be enacted so that no person, entity, or state agency shall use a
1925 manned aircraft, drone, or unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance or observation under the
1926 doctrine of open fields of any individual, property owned by an individual, farm or agricultural
1927 industry without the consent of that individual, property owner, farm or agricultural industry.
1928 '13

1929 We support the use of unmanned aerial systems in agricultural businesses provided
1930 written permission is obtained from the property owner. '14

1931

1932

TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES

1933 In order to achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1934 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion
1935 of this program; '08

1936 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient
1937 runoff into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban
1938 areas, as well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E. deicing
1939 aircraft and parking lots); '08

1940 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific
1941 research, as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately
1942 result in the Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1943 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with
1944 maximum cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the
1945 purchase of equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1946 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay in order to
1947 increase consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the
1948 Bay. '08

1949 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
1950 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08

1951

1952

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY

Bicycle Safety

1954 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
1955 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '07

1956 We recommend that scheduled bicycle, running or similar recreational events be
1957 conducted in a manner that does not inhibit agricultural activities. '18

1958 While more bicycles are using rural roads earlier in the morning and later in the evening,
1959 we recommend that these bicycles display SMV signs because of the poor visibility during this
1960 time of day. '08

Driver Safety Rules

1962 We oppose any further restriction (beyond that in place in 2010) on the use of cell
1963 phones or similar devices in motor vehicles. '12

1964 We oppose any legislation to increase the age to obtain a driver's license. '12

Fines & Surcharges

1966 We support the concept of allocation of truck fine revenues to the transportation fund.
1967 '07

1968 Present law only allows the driver of a truck to appeal a fine or violation against the
1969 truck or its contents. We recommend that the law be amended to allow the driver or the
1970 owner to make such an appeal. '06

Infrastructure Needs

1972 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
1973 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '08

1974 We support the improvements to Interstates 495, 270, 295, 81 and 70. '18

Inspections

1976 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
1977 motor vehicles. '07

1978 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis. '07

Safe Movement of Farm Equipment

1980 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of farmers. '07

1981 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the
1982 proper use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend
1983 that a mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to
1984 aid in recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and
1985 roads in an effort to improve safety conditions. '07

1986 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow-moving vehicle signs for any
1987 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced.'07

1988 We recommend Maryland State Highway Administration use the digital messaging signs
1989 to warn motorists of agricultural equipment use on highways during spring planting season,
1990 summer small grain harvest and fall grain harvest. '14

1991 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
1992 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
1993 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are
1994 (1) properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped
1995 approached another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the
1996 "other driver" being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her
1997 vehicle. '08

1998 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
1999 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
2000 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '08

2001 **Truck Regulations**

2002 We urge the state to adopt the federal update to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety laws
2003 (MAP-21) that are beneficial to farmers. Some of these changes include: relief from hours-of-
2004 service rules during planting and harvesting seasons and exemption from the CDL physical
2005 qualifications requirement (medical card). '13

2006 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent
2007 with those of neighboring states. '17

2008 We recommend that the allowable weight for tri-axle farm trucks with farm tags be
2009 increased from 65,000 lbs to 70,000 lbs. '07

2010 We support the Class K Farm Area vehicle registration. We encourage MVA to require
2011 applicants to show proof of farming activity by providing a copy of their schedule F Tax form.
2012 '07

2013 We support the K Tag radius being a distance of 25 miles or more. '18

2014 We recommend trucks hauling agricultural products that were loaded in fields or other
2015 off-highway locations be allowed a Gross Vehicle Weight limit tolerance of up to 15% as well as
2016 a 15% axle weight tolerance.'14

2017 We support legislation that would allow an increase for live-haul poultry trucks
2018 operating on Maryland highways within 100 miles of the plant a weight variance of 3% to
2019 account for the variations in bird weight. '14

2020 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal but an axle weight is off, enforcement
2021 personnel should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '04

2022 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products
2023 to 10 miles. '09

2024 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws.'07

2025 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
2026 agricultural or commercial traffic on State highways. '11

2027 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
2028 '04

2029 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '08

2030 Vehicles with farm tag registrations should be exempt from the Inner Bridge Formula.
2031 '07

2032 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
2033 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive
2034 Maintenance Program. '05

2035 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
2036 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should
2037 be established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time
2038 periods to get them repaired. '08

2039 We support legislation that would increase the maximum length for any combination of
2040 vehicles with a power unit that is a cargo-carrying vehicle from 55 feet to 65 feet. '08

2041 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. 08

2042 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within
2043 each class. '08

2044 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
2045 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
2046 transportation of farm commodities. '08

2047

2048 UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEMS

2049 Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority

2050 We recommend the University of Maryland systems establish an Ag Producers Board of
2051 Advisors. '11

2052 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
2053 but not at the expense of "traditional crop" courses and research. '08

2054 We urge the University of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional research
2055 as is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support University
2056 of Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education programs.
2057 '04

2058 We recommend the reestablishment of the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to
2059 advise and assist the UMD Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future
2060 structure of UMD Extension. This committee should consist of commodity groups and stake
2061 holders to represent the different geographic regions of the state. '15

2062 We support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and
2063 its tripartite mission of research, teaching, and extension. Because of the many challenges for
2064 Agriculture in the future, which cannot be met without qualified graduates, we support the
2065 need to provide curricula for students who aspire to be the future farmers, agriculture leaders,
2066 ag teachers, extension agents, scientists, and more. '16

2067 We urge the University of Maryland to fill and support the Weed Science position.
2068 Strong emphasis should be centered on the importance of practical herbicide trials and the
2069 dissemination of the results. '18

2070 Funding

2071 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
2072 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
2073 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
2074 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
2075 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
2076 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '13

2077 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
2078 for funding the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We

2079 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable
2080 funding support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the
2081 University. We also urge that the leadership for the Institute for Government Service be
2082 restored to the Extension Service. '11

2083 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

2084 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which provides assistance to
2085 farmers for business plan development. '08

2086 **Law School/Litigation**

2087 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
2088 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
2089 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state
2090 clients. Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm
2091 business should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being
2092 accepted by the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should
2093 provide equal representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '13

2094 **Research and Data**

2095 We urge the University of Maryland and the MDA to conduct further research on small
2096 grain crops that will maximize yields while utilizing fertilizers in the best ways for both plant
2097 uptake and environmental benefits. '12

2098 We support a joint effort by the University of Maryland and the MDA to develop and
2099 publish information that thoroughly and accurately describes the role of agriculture in the
2100 state's economy and in protecting and enhancing the state's natural resource base. '07

2101 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
2102 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system. '07

2103 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
2104 varieties of vegetables, fruits and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase
2105 competition with other areas of the country. '08

2106 We urge the University to reinstate the "Field Days" at the research farms. '15

2107 **Teacher Preparation**

2108 We urge the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to
2109 continue to develop and expand the current program that provides an Agricultural Education
2110 major, giving students a specialization in Ag Education leading to a career path as a high school
2111 agricultural educator and/or extension educator. We support allocating new resources to the
2112 program. '16

2113 **Tuition**

2114 We believe that tuition increases at the schools within the University of Maryland
2115 System be limited to the cost of living index. '15

2116 **University of Maryland Extension**

2117 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
2118 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
2119 compete in a competitive market place. The strength of Extension has always been at the local
2120 level. We recommend that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
2121 Agent/Educator. '14

2122 Area Extension director positions should be eliminated and replaced by previous system
2123 of county extension directors '15

2124 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to develop a nitrogen test to use in
2125 the fall prior to planting small grains. '08

2126 Due to agriculture's ever-increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
2127 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment
2128 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
2129 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
2130 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11

2131 We strongly recommend that the University of Maryland maintain adequate staffing to
2132 write and certify nutrient management plans and to train individual farmers to write their own
2133 plans. '09

2134 We support maintaining an extension educator for agriculture in each county. '18

2135

WILDLANDS

2137 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
2138 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas
2139 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
2140 management plans. '08

2141

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

2142
2143 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to
2144 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to
2145 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident
2146 Canada geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative
2147 impacts on agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the
2148 Chesapeake Bay. '09

2149 We support the creation of a landowner ombudsman within DNR to focus on wildlife
2150 management on private lands. '17

2151 We urge county and state parkland to have a valid wildlife management plan to control
2152 and properly maintain the wildlife population on this land. '17

Bird Control

2154 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any
2155 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and
2156 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

2157 Because they pose a threat to livestock, especially newborn calves, lambs, etc., we urge
2158 removing black headed vultures from the Migratory Birds Treaty Act. '18

Black Bear

2160 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western
2161 Maryland to other counties. '07

2162 We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to
2163 control the black bear population in our state. '15

2164 We support the creation of a Bear Management Permit system for the management of
2165 troublesome bears '15

2166 We urge that bear damage permits also be issued during the time when the bears are
2167 damaging crops not just during the bear hunting season, and as a compromise the bear hide is
2168 turned over to DNR. '18

2169 We urge that the Bear season damage permit apply to the farm where the damage
2170 occurs and contiguous properties, with the landowner's permission. '17

2171 We support changes to the bear hunt which will grant landowners more equitable
2172 access to the hunt. '15

2173 We support the hunting of bear by all agricultural producers and their immediate family
2174 on property they own during the regular bear season without going through the lottery. '17

2175 **Coyote**

2176 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

2177 **Feral Hogs**

2178 Feral hogs should be regulated as a "varmint" species. '15

2179 **Deer**

2180 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of
2181 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '17

2182 We urge DNR to lower the ratio of deer per square mile. '18

2183 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
2184 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
2185 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '17

2186 (1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '17

2187 (2) List Sika deer as an invasive species due to extreme crop damage. '17

2188 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
2189 seasons. '17

2190 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd
2191 population count. '17

2192 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
2193 areas. '17

2194 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
2195 herd. '17

2196 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '17

2197 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent
2198 to agricultural lands. '17

2199 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and
2200 processing harvested deer. '17

2201 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
2202 management. '17

2203 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
2204 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of
2205 deer population. '17

2206 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '17
2207 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
2208 tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17

2209 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a
2210 plan to manage and control wildlife populations. '17

2211 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an
2212 increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17

2213 **Deer Crop Damage**

2214 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer and we support immediate
2215 enactment:

2216 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17

2217 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17

2218 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop
2219 within the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17

- 2220 (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17
 2221 (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17
 2222 (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
 2223 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
 2224 (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
 2225 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
 2226 disposing properly should be eliminated. '17
 2227 (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to use the weapon of choice at
 2228 all times for filling Deer Management permits. '17
 2229 (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
 2230 (10) The commercial sale of venison from certified processing facilities. '17
 2231 (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
 2232 (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the
 2233 authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated
 2234 as such. '17
 2235 (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be
 2236 deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17
 2237 (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation
 2238 non-profit under a crop damage permit. '17
 2239 (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to construct
 2240 wildlife fence around agriculture fields to help deter crop damage. '18

2241 **Fox Chasing**

2242 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from
 2243 landowners to conduct the hunt. '08

2244 **Furbearers**

2245 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

2246 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase
 2247 a stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any
 2248 fee. '08

2249 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

2250 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
 2251 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture
 2252 of fur-bearing wildlife. '10

2253 We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

2254 We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species similar to groundhogs if
 2255 they are causing property damage. '17

2256 **Hunting Ethics and Liability**

2257 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
 2258 taking place. '07

2259 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
 2260 manner similar to motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record
 2261 after an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

2262 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
 2263 the maximum extent possible. '06

2264 Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by
 2265 hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting
 2266 activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in

2267 safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established
2268 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

2269 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

2270 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
2271 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
2272 regulations. '17

2273 We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the
2274 purpose of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18

2275 We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands. '17

2276 We support season-long Sunday hunting for the first 3 hours after sunrise in counties
2277 where Sunday hunting does not already exist. '17

2278 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
2279 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
2280 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
2281 during that season. '17

2282 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17

2283 We support extending the deer hunting season through February. '17

2284 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17

2285 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17

2286 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17

2287 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
2288 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren and employees when hunting only on that
2289 property. We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and
2290 his/her spouse, children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural
2291 purposes (or a sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this
2292 farmland. We are opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license
2293 exemption to persons (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under
2294 the age of 16. '17

2295 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
2296 hunting or trapping privileges. '17

2297 **Waterfowl**

2298 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2299 Service to take any and all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow
2300 goose population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

2301 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
2302 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

2303 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
2304 throughout, starting about November 5th. '09

2305 We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on
2306 or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level
2307 consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14

2308 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
2309 increase in bag limits. '08

2310 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

2311 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:

2312 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08

2313 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09

2314 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of
2315 property lines. '08
2316 We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows
2317 or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area in order to be charged with baiting.
2318 '14

2319 **Waterfowl Crop Damage**

2320 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08
2321 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e. recorders or baiters) to
2322 reduce the snow goose population. '08

2323

2324 **YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

2325 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland
2326 through:

2327 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '07

2328 (2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '10

2329 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation
2330 easements; '07

2331 (4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

2332 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them. '09

2333 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture
2334 to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '09