



# The Maryland Farm Bureau Hotline

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**#1 January 24, 2020**

## **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Day in Annapolis - Wednesday, January 30**

8:30 AM - Briefing for farmers at the Calvert House, 58 State Circle, Annapolis

9:30 AM - Breakfast with legislators

12:00 PM - Governor Hogan delivers State of the State Address

### **Taste of Maryland Agriculture Celebration – Thursday, February 6**

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Welcome to the first Hotline of the 2020 Maryland General Assembly session. The Hotline will be sent to you each week during the session to make you aware of upcoming hearings for bills that will impact Maryland's farm community. We will ask Farm Bureau members to "take action" on proposed legislation to ensure the preservation and protection of Maryland agriculture. The Hotline is distributed to more than 6,000 farmers across the state and to all 188 members of the Maryland General Assembly.

Colby Ferguson and Parker Welch will staff Maryland Farm Bureau's Annapolis office. The office is located on the 2nd floor at 68 State Circle on the corner of Maryland Avenue. The best time to reach them is during the morning hours. If they are out at a hearing or attending another meeting, you may text, email, or leave a voicemail message and they will get back to you as soon as possible. You can reach Colby on his cell phone at (240) 578-0396 or by email at [cferguson@mdfarmbureau.com](mailto:cferguson@mdfarmbureau.com). Parker can be reached on his cell phone at (443) 480-4059 or by email at [pwelch@mdfarmbureau.com](mailto:pwelch@mdfarmbureau.com).

The Hotline descriptions will include the title of the bill, our summary and MFB's position. Our positions are based on policy adopted by grassroots members at our annual convention. You can view the text of the bill and the MGA fiscal analysis by clicking on the hyperlink associated with the bill number and selecting the "documents" tab. Please keep in mind that the positions taken in each Hotline by the Maryland Farm Bureau are

based on the information available on the bill at the time of publication. Our position may change if the bill is amended after publication.

The Hotline will be posted on the MFB website each week. New this year is the MFB action center. Here you can keep up to date on important bills, find your legislator and send messages. The Maryland General Assembly's website can also serve as a valuable tool for legislative information. The site offers the proceedings and agendas of the House and Senate, hearing schedules, bill information and status, and other data updated nightly.

The bills scheduled for hearing next week include:

## Wednesday, January 29, 2020

### [SB0004](#) - Gaming - Sports Betting - Implementation

*Senator Zucker, B&T at 1:00 PM in 3 West Miller*

This bill authorizes sports wagering license holders to accept wagers on sporting events from individuals located at the licensee's video lottery facility or online by an individual physically located in the State. It requires the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission to regulate sports wagering in the State and requires an applicant for sports wagering license or the renewal of the license to pay a fee of \$2,500,000 for the license or \$250,000 for renewal. 20% of the proceeds would go to the Maryland Education Trust Fund. If this bill passes it will be sent to a referendum to be voted on during the 2020 general election.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: 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

This bill does not include the current race tracks as an eligible site, but should be. We would recommend amending the bill to include current racetracks as eligible sites for the sports wagering licenses.

### **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB4 WITH AMENDMENT**

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### [HB0013](#) - Solid Waste Management - Prohibition on Releasing Balloons into Atmosphere

*Delegate Hartman, E&T at 2:00 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill prohibits a person from knowingly and intentionally releasing or causing to be released, or organizing the release of, balloons into the atmosphere. This does not apply to: (1) a balloon that is released for scientific or meteorological purposes; (2) a hot air balloon that is recovered after launch; or (3) the negligent or unintentional release of a balloon. The bill establishes a civil penalty of \$250 for a violation of the Act.

With the ribbon from balloons hindering a farmer during planting and harvesting of crops, removing this litter from the landscape will help reduce a farmer's cost for repairs and downtime when having to remove the ribbon from planters and harvest equipment.

### **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB13**

**Thursday, January 30, 2020**

**[HB0056](#) - Chesapeake Bay Bridge - Reconstruction Advisory Group and Traffic Study**

*Delegate Arentz, E&T at 2:00 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill establishes the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Reconstruction Advisory Group and requires the Advisory Group to hold monthly meetings to study issues associated with traffic on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and U.S. Route 50 between the Severn River and Kent Narrows Bridges. The bill requires the Advisory Group to report its recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by July 1, 2021.

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**In Other Ag News**

**Delegates Briefed on the State of Maryland Agriculture**

Farmers and agricultural leaders briefed members of Maryland's House Environment and Transportation Committee Thursday on the current state of Maryland agriculture. Major topics of discussion during the briefing included Chesapeake Bay clean-up efforts, diversity in farming, and climate-smart agriculture. [Read more here.](#)

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**Trucking Forums Offered**

Maryland Farm Bureau is hosting three farm trucking forums throughout the state in early 2020. Representatives from the Maryland State Highway Administration, Maryland State Police, and Maryland Vehicle Administration will be on hand to present and answer questions. All Maryland Farm Bureau members, farmers, and truck drivers are invited to this forum to discuss the issues facing farmers on rural roads and state highways. [Register here.](#)

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**Hunters Challenged to Combat Wildlife Crop Damage**

Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester County Farm Bureaus teamed up to hold their second annual Doe Harvest Challenge, January 10-12. More than 300 deer were harvested, and 30 were donated to the Maryland Food Bank through the Challenge. The Doe Harvest Challenge was established to address the growing issue of wildlife crop damage through responsible deer management. The lower shore was identified as a targeted area of severe wildlife crop damage. [Read more here.](#)

## Farm Bureau Welcomes Opportunities from Hogan Budget

Governor Larry Hogan released his FY2021 budget proposal Jan. 15 highlighting urgent priorities of the state. The proposed budget includes funding for several key programs to protect environmental resources and support agricultural viability. “Maryland Farm Bureau is pleased to see the Governor’s continued commitment to the agricultural industry,” said Wayne Stafford, Maryland Farm Bureau President. “We appreciate the inclusion of critical funding and technical assistance needed to achieve the conservation initiatives outlined in the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan. We look forward to working with legislators to ensure this funding remains in the final budget.” [Read more here.](#)

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## Marylanders Value Agricultural Education

Maryland Farm Bureau was recognized at the American Farm Bureau Federation’s 101<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention in Austin, Texas for their support of agricultural education and the [American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture](#). “The average American is growing further and further removed from the farm, yet we all rely on agriculture every day,” said Maryland Farm Bureau President Wayne Stafford. “Agricultural education is vital to ensure continued confidence in our food system, and our members recognize that.” Maryland was one of six state Farm Bureaus honored with the Scholar Award. [Read more here.](#)

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## Congressional Leaders in Maryland Vote “Yes” on USMCA

Maryland farmers received a second round of good news this week with Senate approval of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). At a time when farmers continue to face strong economic headwinds, the agreement is expected to increase U.S. agriculture exports by \$2 billion. Congressional members representing Maryland that voted in favor of the USMCA include Senators Cardin and Van Hollen, and Representatives Harris, Hoyer, Ruppberger, Sarbanes, and Trone. [Read more here.](#)

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## Delmarva Dairy Day

Delmarva Dairy Day returns to Hartly Fire Hall in Hartly, Delaware this year on Thursday February 20, 2020 from 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM. This educational program features experts from across the region speaking on current issues facing the industry. Program registration is free and open to any producer or industry professional on the eastern shore, however attendees are asked to RSVP to [Dav Severson](#), at 302-831-2506 by February 7th.

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## New Member Benefit

Our new member benefit is healthcare coverage through [Farm Bureau HealthCare](#)! Learn about your options and choose the plan that fits your life, your family, and your team all while saving an average of 8-12% at [FarmBureauHealthCare.com](#).

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