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#### #4: February 14, 2020

#### *Dates to Remember:*

#### Maryland FFA Day in Annapolis | Thursday, February 20



This week in Annapolis more than 100 farmers from across the state participated in Maryland Farm Bureau's Day in Annapolis. This event on Wednesday featured briefings on issues and a lunch numerous legislators attended. We would like to thank all of the farmers who met with legislators on our priority issues. Finally, we'd like to thank the many legislators on both sides of the aisle who took time to attend our event. [Click here](#) to check out some of our top priority bills from Wednesday's briefing.

The following bills will be heard next week:

## Tuesday, February 18, 2020

**SB 802 / HB 889** - Property Tax - Exemption - Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

*Senator Reilly, B&T at 2:00 PM in 3 West Miller*

*Delegate Bagnall, W&M at 1:00 PM in 130 HOB*

This Anne Arundel Delegation bill states that the property in Davidsonville owned by Maryland Farm Bureau is exempt from property tax because the property is used exclusively for education of the public, encouraging agriculture in the state, assisting in the dissemination of information relating to agriculture, or the maintenance of a natural or recreational area for public use.

## Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 802 & HB 889

## Wednesday, February 19, 2020

**SB 478** - Maryland Green Purchasing Committee - Food Procurement - Greenhouse Gas Emissions

*Senator Lam, EHEA at 1:00 PM in 2 West Miller*

This bill requires the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee, in consultation with the Department of the Environment and the Department of General Services, to develop a way to calculate the amount of Greenhouse Gas emissions food emits in its lifecycle. Then they are to establish best practices for state government procurement to reduce the volume of GHG-intensive foods purchased to the maximum extent practicable as a percentage of gross food purchases. The Maryland Green Purchasing Committee is: the Secretary of General Services, the Secretary of Budget and Management, the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Secretary of the Environment, the Secretary of Health, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland, the Secretary of Information Technology, the Secretary of Education, the State Treasurer, or the Treasurer's designee.

There is no direction in this bill on how food products will be measured and what impacts this will have on Maryland farmers, especially livestock and poultry producers. In addition, the Department of Agriculture is not on the committee to give an ag perspective. Added this year, was a part to include "grown in healthy soils and reducing food waste."

In July 2019, a summer study committee released a draft list of carbon intensive foods and

they were: beef, lamb & goat meat, butter, shellfish, cheese, pork, chicken, cream, fish, eggs, rice and milk. During the summer study, there was no interest in the group drafting the list on where the foods were grown, only on the food's life cycle emissions.

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 478**

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**SB 644** - Income Tax Checkoff - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund  
*Senator Gallion, B&T at 1:00 PM in 3 West Miller*

This bill adds a voluntary check-off on the individual income tax-return form for people to be able to voluntarily contribute to the "The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund Contribution." So essentially this bill allows citizens of Maryland to be able to voluntary contribute to funding recommendations in the Kirwan Commission.

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 644**

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**SB 840** - Environment - Expanded Polystyrene Food Service Products - Definition  
*Senator Hershey, EHEA at 1:00 PM in 2 West Miller*

This bill alters the definition of "expanded polystyrene food service product" to exclude styrofoam egg cartons shipped into Maryland for packaging, or within the state.

### **For Information Only**

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**SB 928** - Environment – Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Construction or Expansion – Manure Transport Plan Requirement  
*Senator Pinsky, EHEA at 1:00 PM in 2 West Miller*

Starting on or after October 1, 2021, this bill would prohibit the Department of the Environment from approving coverage under a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) discharge permit for new a CAFO in counties with more than 30% of their farmland having a soil phosphorus FIV of 150 or greater, unless the permit applicant submits a manure transport plan to the Department as part of the permit application that shows the manure generated will be transported to a county with less than 30% of the farmland above 150 phosphorus FIV or to an organics recycling facility. The counties with more than 30% of their farmland being over 150 phosphorus FIV are Calvert, Caroline, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester.

Counties like Calvert and Caroline are slightly over the 30% threshold outlined in this bill. This would not allow a farmer in these counties to build a commercial poultry operation even though all their land that would use the litter generated is below the 150 FIV trigger.

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 928**

**HB 517** - Constitutional Amendment - Environmental Rights  
*Delegate Stewart, E&T at 1:00 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill proposes an amendment to the Maryland Constitution, contingent on a referendum, to establish that every person has the right to a certain clean and healthy environment. The bill elaborates that a clean environment is all of the following: clean air, pure water, ecosystems that sustain Maryland's natural resources, which include that waters of the state, air, flora, fauna, climate, and public lands, the preservation of the natural, healthful, scenic, and historic values of the environment, and states that Maryland's natural resources are the common property of every person. This would give citizens in Maryland standing to intervene on any state application process if they believe it interferes with any of those clean environment definitions mentioned above. Some examples would include, CAFO's, irrigation, hemp, new buildings, composting, commercial fishing and aquaculture permits.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

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

**Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes HB 517**

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**HB 636** - Public Safety - Access to Firearms - Storage Requirements  
*Delegate Stein, JUD at 1:00 PM in 100 HOB*

This bill would make it illegal to store or leave a loaded or unloaded firearm (pistol, rifle, shotgun) in a place where a minor, meaning anyone under 18, could gain access. If not kept in a safe, somewhere to prohibit unintended persons being able to access the firearm or an external safety lock, an individual could face up to no more than 90 days in jail or a \$1,000 fine, or both. If the unsupervised minor gains access to the firearm, then the owner of the firearm could face up to 2 years in prison, 2,500 fine or both. Finally, if the unsupervised minor uses the firearm to harm another person, then the firearm owner is subject to 5 years in prison, \$5,000 in fines or both.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

- 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. We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by law-abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, long arm, autoloader or manual loader.

## Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes HB 636

Thursday, February 20, 2020

**SB 403** - Labor and Employment - Maryland Wage and Hour Law - Agricultural Stands  
*Senator Carozza, FIN at 1:00 PM in 3 East Miller*

This bill establishes an exemption from the Maryland Wage and Hour Law for an individual employed at an agricultural stand that primarily sells retail perishable or seasonal fresh fruits, vegetables, or horticultural commodities that the farmer has produced.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

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

## Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 403

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**SB 646** - Public Safety - Access to Firearms - Storage Requirements  
*Senator Smith, JPR at 12:00 PM in 2 East Miller*

See bill summary for HB 636 that's being heard on Wednesday.

## Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 646

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**HB 395** - Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Use of Proceeds for Maryland Healthy Soils Program  
*Delegate Krimm, ECM at 1:00 PM in 230 HOB*

This bill would add the Maryland Healthy Soils Program to what is considered climate change and resiliency programs within the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund. In addition, this bill would dedicate 10% or \$1,000,000 of the fund to be used for the Maryland Healthy Soils Program to help meet the air quality goals outlined in the statute and in Maryland's 40 by 30 Regional Greenhouse Gas goals.

Carbon sequestration from production agriculture has proven to greatly reduce the greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. Healthy soils practices like cover crops, no-till farming, rotational grazing and conservation tillage greatly increase the removal of greenhouse gasses. Increasing these practices in Maryland will help lessen climate volatility in the region. Healthy soils programs are a key part of Maryland's regional greenhouse gas reduction goals. Data collected that compares Maryland's current healthy

soils practices to the State's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) finds that over the last 10 years Maryland's healthy soils practices have reduced the amount of GHG by 6.14 mmt compared to 3.6 mmt for RGGI over the same timeframe. Asking farmers to do more with less, and with no assistance, makes it very difficult for farmers to afford to participate. This bill addresses the funding deficiencies needed to create a robust program that will help all of Maryland.

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 395**

**Friday, February 21, 2020**

**HB 335** - Charles County - Public Safety - Buildings Used for Agritourism  
*Charles County Delegation, E&T at 1:00 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill adds Charles County to a list of other counties that exempt existing ag structures that are going to be used for agritourism from being required to retrofit the structure with bathrooms, sprinklers and other high occupancy requirements. This exemption allows up to 200 people in the structure. The structure must still adhere to the structural integrity standards as well as entrance and exit requirements.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

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

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 335**

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**HB 743** - Universal School Start Act of 2020  
*The Speaker (By Request - Administration), W&M at 1:00 PM in 130 HOB*

This bill requires that local boards of education set the start date for school years after Labor Day. This bill also gives authority to the local board to grant a waiver to certain schools given good cause to have a different start date.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

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

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 743**

**HB 1176** - Agriculture - Maryland Healthy Soils Grant Program  
*Delegate Stein, E&T at 1:00 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill establishes the Maryland Healthy Soils Grant Program to provide funds to eligible grantees to administer projects to improve the health, yield, and profitability of soils of the State. It requires the Department of Agriculture to implement and administer the grant program and to calculate an eligible grantee's greenhouse gas reduction per acre by using the COMET-Planner developed by USDA. Lastly, it authorizes but does not mandate the Governor to include \$300,000 in the budget bill for the grant program beginning in fiscal year 2022.

### **Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 1176**

Maryland Farm Bureau members are urged to contact their legislators and members of the relevant committees in support of Farm Bureau's positions on the bills listed above. To contact legislators and follow important bills, visit Maryland Farm Bureau's [action center](#) and select "key legislation".

**Committees & Room Numbers:**

Senate: Budget & Taxation (B&T), 3 West Miller; Education, Health & Environmental Affairs (EHEA), 2 West Miller; Finance (FIN), 3 East Miller; Judicial Proceedings (JPR), 2 East Miller

House: Appropriations (APP), 120 HOB; Economic Matters (ECM), 230 HOB; Environment & Transportation (E&T), 250 HOB; Health & Government Operations (HGO), 240 HOB; Judiciary (JUD), 100 HOB; Ways & Means (W&M), 130 HOB

### **In Other Ag News**

**Register for 2020 Maryland Farmers Market Conference**



Registration is now open for the 2020 Maryland Farmers Market Conference being held on Wednesday, March 18 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, in Annapolis. Interested farmers and market managers are encouraged to register early, as space is limited. [Register here.](#)

**USDA Now Accepting Rural Business Development Grant Applications**

USDA Rural Development in Delaware/Maryland is currently accepting applications for the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) program. The deadline for applications is 4:30pm EST, March 31, 2020. All applicants are encouraged to contact their state office to discuss project ideas prior to completing an application. [Apply today.](#)



## Farmers May Apply Commercial Fertilizer to Small Grains



The Maryland Department of Agriculture announced that farmers who planted small grains for harvest last fall may “top dress” these crops with commercial fertilizer beginning February 15, as long as ground conditions remain favorable and in accordance with their nutrient management plans. [Read more here.](#)

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## Sign-ups for Farm Bill Safety Net Programs Open

Contact your local FSA office now to enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, two popular safety net programs, for 2019 and 2020 crop year. The deadline for 2019 signup is Monday, March 16 and the 2020 deadline is Tuesday, June 30. All participating farms need to be enrolled no later than these dates. [Sign up today!](#)



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## Trucking Forums Offered



Maryland Farm Bureau has trucking forums scheduled for Frederick and Wye Mills. 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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## Member Benefit: Budget

Grab the one you love and surprise them with a trip for Valentine’s Day! With your Maryland Farm Bureau membership, you can receive up to 30%\* off a Budget car rental and whisk them away in style. Find out more, by visiting [here.](#)

