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This year's General Assembly session was like no other. The session started off with one of, if not the highest, number of bills introduced in a single session. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, session was cut short by nearly 3 weeks. As in other years, there were several bills that were harmful to Maryland agriculture. Yet, once again, we were able to kill all but one of those bills. In addition to working to prevent bad legislation from passing, we worked on many bills that would help our farmers. Even with a severely shortened session, we were successful in getting 12 of those bills passed this year. One of the reasons for this success was the open-door policy from all the legislators. We appreciated the opportunity to meet and work with legislators from both parties. One of the highlights of this session includes the passage of the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program and Grant Fund. In cooperation with several ag stakeholders, as well as MARBIDCO, this fund will allow Maryland farmers to participate in the state's food procurement program while also providing grant funding to create food aggregation projects to help smaller farmers combine their products to be able to supply the amount of product needed to meet the procurement demands.

On the budget, Governor Hogan was very fair to agriculture again this year as he maintained the funding for the Maryland Ag Cost Share program (MACS). MALPF and the other land preservation programs saw full funding again this year, along with an additional \$1 million in funding for MARBIDCO's Next Generation Ag Land Preservation Program for small property investments.

MFB supported a bill from the governor that removed fees and other requirements to allow brownfields to become better sites for commercial solar facilities. Relieving the pressure to use prime and productive farmland to site commercial solar is one of MFB's primary goals. The bill opens up more undesirable land for these solar siting options.

With the COVID-19 outbreak, we are not sure if/when the governor will sign them into law. The effective date for most new laws is October 1, 2020. For the remainder of the year, Maryland Farm Bureau will keep you informed through the Government Relations Bulletin, published every month. The GRB will be sent to those on our email subscription list and will be posted on our website [here](#). Listed below are several of the bills that Maryland Farm Bureau tracked during session.

2020 Passed Bills

Agricultural Policy:

[SB 985/HB 1488](#): Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program and Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund - Establishment

Senator Hester & Delegate Charkoudian

This bill establishes the Office for the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), as well as the Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund through the Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO). This bill would encourage units that procure food within the state to meet a 20% total dollar value goal of contracts made with certified local farm enterprises. Sponsors of this bill worked closely with Maryland Farm Bureau, MDA, MARBIDCO, and other stakeholders during the interim to make this bill beneficial for farmers in Maryland.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 985 & HB 1488

[HB 805](#): Montgomery County - Public Safety - Buildings Used for Agritourism

Montgomery County Delegation

As amended, this bill would enable Montgomery County to allow up to 100 people in an existing ag structure for the purposes of agritourism that would be exempt from being required to retrofit the structure with bathrooms, sprinklers and other high occupancy requirements. The structure must still adhere to the structural integrity standards as well as entrance & exit requirements. Allowing farms to use existing barns during the non-growing season not only allows them to cut the cost of offering agritourism activities, but also prevents them from having to build more structures just to offer some farm diversification and supplemental income to the working farm.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 805

[HB 999](#): Member-Regulated Cooperatives - Establishment (Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020)

Delegate Sample-Hughes

This bill establishes a process to allow cooperatives to become member-regulated. The intent of this bill is for a member-regulated cooperative to make decisions about electric

rates and additional offerings to members, like broadband, by vote of its board of directors with input from members. The member-regulated cooperative would then not be required to get approval from the Public Service Commission on these matters. This bill specifically would allow Choptank Electric the ability to provide reliable broadband service to its members through its existing 650 miles of middle-mile fiber. Reliable broadband is necessary for farmers to be competitive with new and emerging technologies.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 999

SB 597/HB 687: Agriculture - Cost-Sharing Program - Fixed Natural Filter Practices (Amended)

Senator Young & Delegate Stein

As amended, this bill starts by prohibiting the use of Maryland Ag Cost-Share funds (MACS) to fund a conservation practice that does not address a natural resource concern identified by NRCS or results in a conservation benefit. Maryland Farm Bureau opposed the original bill because it would authorize both MACS and Bay Restoration Funds (BRF) to be made available for fixed natural filter practices in addition to cover crops and other NRCS approved best management practices. However, the bill was amended to remove the Bay Restoration Funds and keep funding for only cover crops. The bill removes the tons of soil saved or an amortization formula for determining the value of the BMP. Finally, the bill requires that multi-species cover crop mixes receive the same cost-share rate as a single species cover crop like rye. Maryland Farm Bureau removed its opposition to the bill after the BRF was amended out.

For Information Only

Energy:

SB 281: Renewable Energy Development and Siting (REDS) – Evaluations and Tax and Fee Exemptions (Amended)

The President (By Request - Administration)

This bill would allow the Maryland Department of the Environment to waive the fees and requirements for remediation of brownfields, landfills and other contaminated properties if clean or renewable electrical generation sites are being created as long as they are not causing a disturbance to the soil that could cause a negative environmental impact.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 281

Environmental Protection:

SB 300: Pesticides - Use of Chlorpyrifos - Prohibition (Amended)

Senator Lam

As amended, this bill phases out the use of chlorpyrifos in Maryland, starting with aerial spraying on October 1, 2020. The second phase out would start on December 31, 2020 with the removal of insecticides that include Chlorpyrifos and seeds treated with chlorpyrifos. There is an exemption for an insecticide that contains chlorpyrifos to treat the trunks and lower limbs of fruit trees and snap bean seeds that have been treated with chlorpyrifos that is good until June 30, 2021. If the Department of Agriculture concludes that no effective alternative exists, the department may extend the exemption from July 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021.

Maryland Farm Bureau has formally asked the governor to veto the bill since the Maryland Department of Agriculture has already promulgated the regulations to phase out chlorpyrifos in Maryland.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 300

SB 840: Environment - Expanded Polystyrene Food Service Products - Definition

Senator Hershey

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

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 840

Gun Laws:

SB 208/HB 4: Public Safety - Rifles and Shotguns - Secondary Transactions (Amended)

Senator Lee & Delegate Atterbeary

As amended, this bill requires, with specified exceptions, that a licensed firearms dealer facilitate the sale or lease of a rifle or shotgun. A dealer may charge a reasonable fee for facilitating a transfer of a rifle or shotgun. The bill establishes penalties for violations as much as 5 years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine. The bill was amended to remove Maryland Farm Bureau's main opposition to the bill which was the non-purchase transfers.

For Information Only

Hunting/Wildlife & Natural Resources:

SB 427/HB 1304: Baltimore County - Hunting - Deer Management Permits

Senator West & Delegate Brooks

This bill adds Baltimore County to the list of shotgun only hunting counties that would allow the use of a rifle for the harvesting of deer only under a Deer Management Permit. The regular deer firearms hunting season would still remain shotgun only. Currently, Calvert, Charles, Harford and St. Mary's counties have this provision in the law. This bill will expand our farmers' ability in Baltimore County to utilize another tool in the toolbox in addressing the crop damage inflicted on their crops as a result of foraging deer herds. A Deer Management Permit does not allow nighttime shooting and is only permitted by DNR after DNR confirms crop damage due to deer. The DMP only allows the harvest of antlerless deer and all deer harvested are to be donated to food banks or processed for the farmer's own consumption. There are only 62 DMP's issued in Baltimore County.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 427 & HB 1304

Livestock & Poultry:

SB 189: State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners – Cease and Desist Orders and Civil Penalties (Amended)

Senator Gallion

As amended, this bill authorizes the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (SBVME), on review and approval of the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Secretary's designee, to issue a cease and desist order and impose a civil penalty against a person who practices, attempts to practice, or offers to practice veterinary medicine without a license. The civil penalty may be up to \$10,000 for each violation. In setting the amount of a civil penalty, SBVME must consider (1) the seriousness of the violation; (2) the harm caused by the violation; (3) the good faith of the violator; (4) any history of previous violations by the violator; and (5) any other relevant factors. Any penalties collected are paid into the state general fund.

To ensure that farmer's animals are being cared for in a safe and secure manner, the individuals practicing vet medicine should be licensed. This bill gives the SBVME the power to make sure that is happening in Maryland. This bill does not prevent a farmer from caring for their own animals or assisting another farmer when caring for their animals. This bill just addresses those that are getting paid for their services as a vet.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 189

HB 171: Crimes Against Animals - Interference With Livestock (Amended)

Delegate Guyton

As amended, this bill expands the scope of current law that prohibits the interfering with, injuring, tampering with, or destroying a horse used for racing, breeding or for a competitive exhibition of skill, breed, or stamina by including all equine. The bill also alters the penalty provision such that violators are guilty of a misdemeanor, rather than a felony, and on conviction are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or imprisonment for up to one year, rather than imprisonment of between one and three years.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 171

Tax Policy & Budget:

SB 4: Gaming - Sports Betting - Implementation (Amended)

Senator Zucker

As amended, this bill, which is subject to voter referendum, authorizes a sports wagering licensee to conduct and operate sports wagering in the state, including online sports wagering. A video lottery operator, thoroughbred horse racing licensee (excluding a specified special thoroughbred licensee), or the owner of a sports facility in Prince George's County that is used primarily for professional football may apply to the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission (SLGCC) for a sports wagering license and pay an initial license fee. The license may be renewed every five years for a license renewal fee of 25% of the initial license fee. Of the sports wagering proceeds, generally 80% is retained by the sports wagering licensee, 1% is distributed to the Small Minority and Women-Owned Businesses Account (SMWOBA), and the remainder, along with application and licensing fees, is distributed to the Education Trust Fund (ETF).

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 4

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

Senator Reilly & Delegate Bagnall

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

Transportation:

HB 56: Chesapeake Bay Bridge - Reconstruction Advisory Group and Traffic Study

Delegate Arentz

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

2020 Unsuccessful Bills

Agricultural Policy:

SB 188: Public Health - Misbranded Food - Meat Products

Senator Gallion

This bill adds language to existing law as it pertains to misbranded food products. This bill would make it illegal to label a food product as meat if the product is cell-based or derived from plants or insects.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 188

SB 295/HB 156: Agriculture - Cost-Sharing Program - Sale of Harvested Cover Crops

Senator Hough & Delegate Kerr

The bill authorizes a person that plants rye or two-row barley cover crops as a best management practice to sell the harvested cover crop to a malting facility in the state or to a person that will process the cover crop for sale in the state. The bill doesn't designate an amount of subsidy that would be paid for the practice.

For Information Only

SB 432/HB 335: Charles County - Public Safety - Buildings Used for Agritourism

Charles County Senators and Delegation

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 Supports SB 432 & HB 335

SB 707/HB 1541: Task Force on the Tourism Industry in Maryland

Senator Carter & Delegate Brooks

This bill establishes the Task Force on the Tourism Industry in Maryland to study

challenges and opportunities within Maryland's tourism industry. The task force will review current funding, seek input from all sectors that contribute to tourism, including rural areas and agritourism, and make recommendations to the governor by January 1, 2020 regarding additional funding, training, and other resources needed to increase diversity and inclusion in the tourism industry. Agritourism is a great way for farmers to gain more interest in their products while educating the public on farming and where their food comes from. We asked for an amendment that would include a representative from the agritourism sector on the task force.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 707 & HB 1541

SB 723: Consumer Protection - Right to Repair

Senator Hester

This bill requires an original equipment manufacturer, on fair and reasonable terms, to make available to an independent repair provider or owner of digital electronic equipment any documentation, parts, tools, or updates to information or embedded software. It also requires, as it applies to equipment that contains a security-related function, any documentation, tools, parts, or updates needed to reset the lock or function when disabled. After talking to farm equipment manufacturers, they are rolling out a program to offer these documents, software and information this year. Instead of pushing for legislation, Maryland Farm Bureau is working with the different equipment manufactures to assist with regional showcases for the dealers to rollout this information.

For Information Only

SB 964/HB 510: Agriculture - Hemp Research and Production - Prohibitions

Senator Hettleman & Delegate Stein

This bill would remove the ability for the Maryland Department of Agriculture to issue a permit to grow hemp on a farm that is within 2 miles of a residential community of 10 or more residents. This restriction would be for both the hemp pilot program and the regular farm program that was approved in the 2018 Farm Bill.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 964 & HB 510

HB 100: Maryland Agricultural Commission - Hemp Industry Member

Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo

This bill increases the membership of the Maryland Agricultural Commission to include a member representing the hemp industry.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 100

HB 574: Agriculture - License to Produce Hemp - Limitation

Delegate Cardin

This bill would prohibit the ability for the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to grant a license to produce hemp if the land is located within 25 feet of a property or properties with three or more individual residences, unless the person agrees to produce hemp in an indoor facility that exhausts its fumes to the outside with approved purifying apparatuses to adequately reduce all odors.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes HB 574

[HB 799: Consumer Protection - Right to Repair Farm Equipment](#)

Delegate Hornberger

This bill requires that farm equipment manufacturers provide information to an independent repair provider or farmer so that they can take action to repair the equipment. The bill does not prevent a user from removing air emission requirements that would allow the equipment to have more power. There is concern that without restrictions, an independent repair provider or farmer could remove technologies from the equipment that would void the warranty and possibly prevent a dealer from purchasing the tampered piece of equipment in a trade. After talking to farm equipment manufacturers, they are rolling out a program to offer these documents, software and information this year. Instead of pushing for legislation, Maryland Farm Bureau is working with the different equipment manufacturers to assist with regional showcases for the dealers to rollout this information.

For Information Only

[HB 1098: Use of Public Funds - Playground & Athletic Field Surfaces - Authorizations, Preferences, and Prohibitions \(Safe and Healthy Fields Act\)](#)

Delegate Solomon

This bill encourages all school sports fields to return to the use of real grass, rather than artificial turf. State funds would no longer be used to create playgrounds or athletic fields with synthetic surfaces. Currently, state funds can be used for the construction of fields made from either synthetic or natural materials. This bill would only permit the use of funds for real turf fields. Funding would also be provided for the maintenance of the grass fields, as well as the drainage systems that would be required. Based on the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there are 4,792 acres of turf grass grown in Maryland, an increase of more than 300 acres from the 2012 census. The value of turf grass sales from Maryland farms is more than \$23 million per year. Having an opportunity to increase the demand for natural grass turf is not only better for the environment but also increases the economic opportunities for farmers in Maryland.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 1098

[HB 1438: Agriculture – Processing of Poultry Litter for Alternative Use](#)

Delegate Jacobs

This bill establishes an alternative use for poultry litter in Maryland and develops a transportation infrastructure to move the byproduct of processing poultry litter off the Delmarva peninsula without taking any money from the Manure Transport Program. Offering alternative ways to utilize excess poultry litter on the lower eastern shore is a good way to remove the pressure to transport this litter to other parts of the state.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 1438

HB 1534: Department of Agriculture - Urban Agriculture Grant Program

Delegate Wells

This bill established an Urban Agriculture Grant Program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), as well as an Urban Agriculture Grant Fund. The purpose of the Urban Agriculture Grant Program is to increase the viability of urban farming and improve access to urban-grown foods. The Urban Agriculture Grant Fund is to provide funds to nonprofit organizations in Baltimore City. The money allocated to the fund is intended to come from a portion of Program Open Space.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 1534

Aquaculture:

SB 342/HB 210: Aquaculture - Leases in Water Column - Riparian Right of First Refusal

Senator Bailey & Delegate Crosby

This bill establishes that a riparian property owner or lessee shall have the right of first refusal to apply for and, if approved, obtain a water column lease, or an aquaculture lease for use in the water column in an Aquaculture Enterprise Zone and in an area that fronts the riparian property. The "actively work the lease" state requirement would not apply to a riparian property owner that exercises their right of first refusal and obtains the aquaculture lease. This bill severely limits the ability for oyster aquaculture farmers to acquire aquaculture leases in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The process to apply for and be approved for an aquaculture lease is already an extensive process that can take multiple years to complete. However, allowing a landowner that has shoreline frontage to open any available aquaculture leases to have the right of first refusal to lease up these areas could eliminate the opportunities for new aquaculture leases that would actually be worked and produce oysters while cleaning up the Bay. This type of legislation could set a precedent and set up the next type of legislation that would allow a landowner adjacent to a farm for rent to get the right of first refusal to rent the ground and not farm it.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 342 & HB 210

[SB 689/HB 856](#): Unlawful Taking of Oysters From Submerged Land Leases and Water Column Leases - Penalties

Senator Klausmeier & Delegate Boyce

This bill establishes a minimum fine of \$2,000 and maximum fine of \$3,000 for unlawfully taking oysters from a submerged land lease or water column lease. It also requires a person that is convicted to take a class on Maryland's Commercial Fishery Laws and, until that class is completed, the person's commercial fishing licenses will remain suspended. Several aquaculture operations have significant theft annually and, in many cases, it is very tough to catch the thieves in the act. However, when they are caught, they get minimal fines and basically a slap on the hand. Stiffer penalties need to be put in place for both the person stealing oysters and the companies that knowingly purchase the stolen oysters.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 689 & HB 856

[HB 1434](#): Aquaculture Leases – Marking Requirements and Use of Lease – Alterations

Delegate Clark

This bill clarifies when a new aquaculture lease must have the corner markers installed. It specifies that not until the lease area is actually starting to be used does the markers need to be installed. In addition, the bill clarifies that the owner of a lease has 30 days to replace corner markers that get displaced due to named storms, significant northeaster storm events, icing conditions and criminal act of theft or destruction of property in the lease area. Lastly, the bill would require DNR to allow an oyster lease to not have to work their lease during a year where there is no shellfish larvae or shellfish seed available.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 1434

Education:

[SB 562](#): Public Schools - Flexible Instructional Days - Policy Requirements

Senator Gallion

The bill authorizes a county board of education to apply to the State Board of Education to implement a policy for the use of up to 5 flexible instructional days during the school year. The bill defines "flexible instructional day" as one in which a public school provides remote academic instruction because a natural or civil disaster or severe weather conditions prevented schools from opening. For years, school systems have used the 180-day restriction to oppose starting school after Labor Day. This bill would allow a school system to address the snow day issue through flexible school days. Pennsylvania uses this practice in their school system.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 562

[SB 986/HB 1487](#): Public Schools – Agricultural Education and Grant Programs
Senator Hester & Delegate Shoemaker

This bill defines a Certified Ag Education program in Maryland public schools and requires local school programs to adopt and use this definition in their existing ag education programs or when they are creating new ag education programs. In addition, the department may award grants to county boards, nonprofit organizations, and other entities to compensate teachers for working extra duty days to enable students to participate in agricultural education programs and activities; provide funding for students who are enrolled in agricultural education courses to pay dues and participate in the Maryland FFA association; provide teacher development and training, including attendance at summer training conferences; and maintain existing agricultural education programs and implement new department-approved agricultural education programs in public schools in the state. The bill requires the governor to include an appropriation of \$785,000 to the program each fiscal year starting in fiscal year 2022.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 986 & HB 1487

[HB 743](#): Universal School Start Act of 2020
The Speaker (By Request - Administration)

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 Supports HB 743

Energy:

[SB 741/HB 1390](#): Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - Electric Facilities - Study and Procedures
Senator Feldman & Delegate Brooks

This bill adds requirements to the evaluations conducted and notifications made as part of the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) process and prohibits a local government from taking adverse actions related to CPCN projects. The Public Service Commission (PSC) is prohibited from requiring a CPCN applicant for a generating station to apply for or receive local zoning approvals and may likewise not deny a CPCN for the same reasons. The bill also establishes requirements for CPCNs for solar photovoltaic (PV) systems and excludes the installation of visual buffering, including vegetative screening and fencing, from the definition of "construction" for purposes of the CPCN process. This bill strips most of a county's ability to weigh in on where commercial solar facilities can be sited. This bill strengthens the preemption option and forces the PSC to move solar projects forward even if there are significant issues and opposition to the site.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 741 & HB 1390

Environmental Protection:

SB 28/HB 13: Solid Waste Management - Prohibition on Releasing a Balloon Into the Atmosphere

Senator Lam & Delegate Hartman

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 SB 28 & HB 13

SB 313/HB 209: Plastics and Packaging Reduction Act

Senator Augustine & Delegate Lierman

These bills prohibits a store from distributing plastic carryout bags to a customer at the point of sale and requires a store to charge and collect at least 10 cents if the store provides a customer a durable carryout bag. These bills also establish a Single-Use Products Workgroup, requiring the workgroup to study and make recommendations regarding single-use products, etc. Maryland Farm Bureau asked to amend the definition of a plastic carryout bag in the bill to allow retail stores the option to use biodegradable plastic bags.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 313 & HB 209

SB 478/HB 772: Maryland Green Purchasing Committee - Food Procurement - Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Senator Lam & Delegate Gilchrist

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.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 478 & HB 772

SB 841/HB 1312: Water Pollution Control - Discharge Permits - Industrial Poultry Operations

Senator Lam & Delegate Stewart

This bill prohibits the Department of the Environment from issuing discharge permits to a person for a new industrial poultry operation or for the purpose of extending or expanding an existing industrial poultry operation of over 300,000 poultry a year on or before September 30, 2020. This bill would eliminate the commercial poultry industry in Maryland. The typical poultry house today grows between 30,000 and 40,000 birds per flock and there are at least 5 flocks grown a year, so one poultry house would grow at least 150,000 birds a year. This bill would eliminate operations of 2 houses or more. The way the bill is drafted, this would also prevent MDE from issuing a new permit when the existing poultry operation's 5-year permit expires. Based on this restriction, this would eliminate commercial poultry operations in Maryland over the next 5 years.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 841 & HB 1312

SB 928: Environment – Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Construction or Expansion – Manure Transport Plan Requirement

Senator Pinsky

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 a new 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 395: Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Use of Proceeds for Maryland Healthy Soils Program

Delegate Krimm

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

[HB 1176](#): Agriculture - Maryland Healthy Soils Grant Program

Delegate Stein

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

Gun Laws:

[SB 646/ HB 636](#): Public Safety - Access to Firearms - Storage Requirements

Senator Smith & Delegate Stein

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 Opposes SB 646 & HB 636

Hunting/Wildlife & Natural Resources:

[SB 426/HB 1436](#): Baltimore County - Hunting - Nongame Birds and Mammals
Senator West & Deleagte Brooks

This bill repeals a requirement that you must first purchase a hunting license before you can hunt or trap groundhogs in Baltimore County. Farmers continue to have trouble with groundhogs in their fields and barns. If passed, this bill would allow farmers in Baltimore county to follow the same requirements as farmers in every other county in the state. Wildlife like groundhogs continue to cause crop and farm equipment damage on Maryland farms around the state. Only in Baltimore county does a farmer and their hired workers need a hunting license to be able to remove problem groundhogs around their farm. This bill cleans up an outdated law and conforms Baltimore County's law with all the other counties in the state that don't require a hunting license to remove groundhogs.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 426 & HB 1436

Labor:

[SB 403/HB 1123](#): Labor and Employment - Maryland Wage and Hour Law - Agricultural Stand
Senator Carozza & Delegate Sample-Hughes

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 Supports SB 403 & HB 1123

Land Preservation:

[HB 1146](#): Forest Conservation - Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund - Distribution of Agricultural Land Transfer Tax Revenue
Delegate Stein

This bill increases the dedicated amount of agricultural land transfer tax revenue to be used on woodland transfers from \$200,000 to \$500,000 a year. The bill also reduces the

amount of woodland on the property from 100% wooded to 80%. Even though, this is more of a forest preservation easement process, it is being funded by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Fund, which is dedicated to preserving prime and productive farmland in the state and is already an underfunded source.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes HB 1146

[HB 1362](#): Harford County - Transfer Tax - Distribution of Proceeds

Delegate Lisanti

This bill alters the distribution of Harford County transfer tax revenues so that revenues are distributed in a manner determined by the Harford County Council. Under current law, 50% of transfer tax revenues are dedicated to the county's agricultural land preservation program and 50% are dedicated to fund school construction projects. If passed, this would allow the county council to be able to reallocate the ag preservation program funds to pay for the county's portion of the Blueprint for Excellence in Education. Even though this is a county bill, this would set a precedent that could eliminate the funding for preserving farmland around the state.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes HB 1362

Tax Policy & Budget:

[SB 644](#): Income Tax Checkoff - The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund

Senator Gallion

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." This bill allows citizens of Maryland to be able to voluntarily contribute to funding recommendations in the Kirwan Commission.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 644

[SB 979](#): Income Tax Credit - Value-Added Processing Expenses

Senator Hester

This bill adds the ability for individuals to claim a tax credit for qualified capital expenses used for value-added processing in an amount equal to 25% and capping the amount of credits to be used in any year by the Department of Commerce at \$1,000,000. Helping farmers add more value to their crops will help keep them profitable in Maryland. The initial costs to further value-add to a farmer's crops is very steep. This bill uses a tax credit to offset those steep costs. Helping the next generation to get into farming will continue to strengthen the future of agriculture in Maryland.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports SB 979

HB 222: Income Tax Rates - Capital Gains Income

Deleagte Palakovich

This bill would increase an individual's income tax rate by an additional 1% on net capital gains and would apply starting 2020 taxable year. This would include the net capital gains from the sale of a land preservation easement. Farmers already take a discount on the value of their easement. For several years now, MFB has asked for the net capital gains from the sale of easements to be exempted from a farmer's income tax. This bill does not address the farmer issue and compounds it by increasing the tax, further devaluing their land.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes HB 222

HB 256: Maryland Estate Tax - Unified Credit

Delegate Wilkins

This bill alters the limit on the unified credit used for determining the Maryland estate tax for decedents dying on or after July 1, 2020, to not exceed \$1,000,000; and altering a certain limitation on the amount of the Maryland estate tax for decedents dying on or after July 1, 2020, to not exceed \$1,000,000. This bill does not alter the subsection in the law that pertains to agriculture so the limit remains at \$5,000,000 for farms.

For Information Only

Transportation:

SB 650: Vehicle Laws - Title Service Agents - Out-of-State Vehicle Titles and Registrations

Senator Young

This bill prohibits a title service agency from issuing an out-of-state title, registration, or registration plate for a vehicle or trailer that is required to be titled and registered in the state of Maryland. Due to the high cost of tagging farm trailers in Maryland, many farmers use out-of-state options to tag trailers for a considerably lower cost, and for a significantly longer period of time. This bill would eliminate the ability for a farmer to use an out-of-state vehicle or trailer registration.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 650

HB 1240: Motor Vehicles - Registration - Class E (Truck) "Dump Service Registration" Vehicles

Delegate Miller

This bill would create a 70,000 pound "dump service registration" classification within the Class E Farm Truck section of the law. This dump service registration already exists in the commercial truck section of the law, but not in the farm truck section 13-921 of the Transportation Article. This bill would just add the dump service registration to Section 13-921 and price it at \$5.75 per 1,000 pounds. Many farms today use these 4 axle dump trucks to haul grain, silage and other crops from the field to either the farm or directly to the mills. Allowing these dump trucks to be classified as a farm truck and setting the registration fee to be similar to farm trucks of a similar weight class helps keep the cost of production and transportation down. Which in turn allows the farmer to be more profitable. With margins being razor thin in the agriculture commodity market, any assistance with reducing the cost of producing those commodities improves the farmer's bottom line.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 1240