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#7: March 6, 2020



This week in Annapolis was busy with a final push to complete bill hearings and committee voting sessions. With next week being the last week for committee bill hearings before the March 16th crossover deadline, it will also be filled with committee voting sessions and lengthy floor debates.

We would like to thank all the FFA officers and students from Frederick, Howard, Gwynn Park, and Southern FFA for coming to testify as well as MFB board member Billy Bishoff in support of the agriculture education bills. We would also like to thank Jo-Ann Chason and Frank Bauerlein for testifying on Baltimore County's hunting bill this Wednesday. Take a

look at our [action center](#) and click "key legislation" to view all the bills we have taken a position on.

The following bills will be heard next week:

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

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

Montgomery County Delegation, E&T at 1:00 PM in 250 HOB

This bill adds Montgomery County to the list of counties that exempt existing ag structures used for agritourism from being required to retrofit the structure with bathrooms, sprinklers and other high occupancy requirements. This exemption allows up to 50 people in the structure. The structure must still adhere to the structural integrity standards as well as entrance & exit requirements. The counties already exempt are: Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Howard, Kent, Prince George's, St. Mary's, Somerset, and Talbot County.

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 1304](#) - Baltimore County - Hunting - Deer Management Permits

Delegate Brooks, E&T at 1:00 PM in 250 HOB

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 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 HB 1304

[HB 1488](#) - Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program and Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund

Delegate Charkoudian, HGO at 1:00 PM in 240 HOB

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 Policy:

- We encourage state and local agencies and institutions to purchase all types of Maryland agricultural commodities and products.

Maryland Farm Bureau Supports HB 1488

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

SB 723 - Consumer Protection - Right to Repair

Senator Hester, FIN at 1:00 PM in 3 East Miller

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.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

- We support legislation requiring agricultural equipment manufacturers to make available the necessary documents, software and information to allow independent shops and individuals to repair equipment.

For Information Only

SB 841 - Water Pollution Control - Discharge Permits - Industrial Poultry Operations

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

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 on or before September 30, 2020.

The way this bill is written, not only would this eliminate any new poultry operations of 300,000 chickens or more grown annually from being built in Maryland, but more importantly, it would eliminate all commercial poultry growers in Maryland as the bill also prevents MDE from re-issuing a CAFO permit to an existing operation at the end of their 5-year permit period starting in October of this year.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 841

SB 912 - Environment - Climate Crisis and Education Act

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

This bill establishes a Climate Crisis Initiative in the Department of the Environment. The initiative provides for: the establishment of greenhouse gas reduction goals; the establishment of a climate crisis council; the assessment of greenhouse gas pollution fees; funding for education under the recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, commonly known as the "Kirwan Initiative"; the assessment of a fee on the sale or registration of new high-emission vehicles; benefits to households and employers in the state to mitigate the impact of fees under the initiative; and the funding of activities for greenhouse gas reduction and sequestration, improvements in resiliency, and the promotion of a just economic transition in the state.

In this bill, a greenhouse gas pollution fee shall be collected on all fossil fuels brought into the state for combustion in the state and electricity used in the state that is generated by fossil fuels. There are no exemptions for fuels used in agriculture. Farmers don't have the ability to increase their commodity prices to compensate for the increased cost of production a bill like this would create.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:

- We oppose the creation of a state carbon and/or greenhouse gas reduction tax/fee.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes SB 912

HB 799 - Consumer Protection - Right to Repair Farm Equipment

Delegate Hornberger, ECM at 1:00 PM in 230 HOB

This bill requires that farm equipment manufacturers provide information to an independent repair provider or farmer so 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.

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For Information Only

Thursday, March 12, 2020

HB 1543 - Environment – Climate Crisis and Education Act

Delegate Fraiser-Hidalgo, ECM at 1:00 PM 230 HOB

See bill summary for SB 912 that's being heard on Wednesday.

Maryland Farm Bureau Opposes HB 1543

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



Podcast: Agriculture & Climate Change

Climate change has been a hot topic in the media lately, and agriculture often gets a bad name. But, what if we told you it's the only industry that can offset greenhouse gas emissions and act as a carbon sink? [Listen here!](#)

Community Film Screening of "SILO"

Maryland Farm Bureau and Nationwide are sponsoring a free screening of the film "SILO". SILO is the first ever feature film about a grain bin entrapment. Inspired by true events, SILO follows a harrowing day in an American farm town. Disaster strikes when teenager Cody Rose is entrapped in a 50-foot-tall grain bin. The movie screening is on March 26, 2020 from 6-9 PM at North Carolina High School. [More here.](#)



Webinar: Long-Term Care



Did you know that 7 in 10 Americans age 65 or older will need some form of long-term care (LTC) services during their remaining years? What can you expect and how will you pay for it? Learn more from Nationwide about how, as a farmer, you can better estimate your potential LTC expenses in your community and begin building a plan to fund it. [Register here.](#)

Broadband Mapping Legislation Headed to President's Desk

"Broadband access is no longer a luxury, it's a necessity for our farmers and rural communities. This legislation will improve the National Broadband Map to more accurately identify where there is and is not broadband service." [Read more here.](#)



Impact of H-2B Visa Program on Maryland Seafood Industry



Maryland's Best Seafood, a marketing program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture, released a survey measuring the economic impact of the state's crab industry and the importance of the federal H-2B temporary visa program. [Read more here.](#)

Funding Available to Protect Maryland Wetlands and Family Farms

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Conservation Easements Program. State and local governments, non-governmental organizations and private landowners who are interested in protecting and enhancing land through an agricultural or wetland easement are encouraged to contact their local USDA service center to find out how to apply. [More here.](#)



Member Benefit: Grainger



Winter is finally over and you know what that means—spring cleaning! Save on the items you need to help make your facility sparkle with exclusive Grainger discounts. See the benefits of shopping with Grainger as a Maryland Farm Bureau member [here](#).