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Hotline #3

February 3, 2023

Welcome to our third Hotline of the 2023 Maryland General Assembly session. This week in Annapolis has continued to be hectic due to bill introductions. The bill introduction deadline remains next Friday, February 10 in the House and this coming Monday, February 6 in the Senate. The primary bill that Maryland Farm Bureau testified on this week was the bill to ban pesticides in Maryland unless they were tested for and found to have no PFAS in them. This sounds fine, except there are no validated tests available to meet this requirement. Therefore, this bill would ban all classifications of pesticides (including things like Comet and Clorox along with crop protectants). MDFB along with several other Ag allies opposed this bill. Bill hearings will start to increase over the next few weeks as both chambers will work to meet the bill crossover deadline of March 20.

Additionally, the LEAD Maryland fellows were in town for their State Government seminar and MDFB presented to them with an introduction to the legislative process as well as the differences in the roles of lobbyists and advocates, and the art of testifying. On Thursday, many Farm Bureau members and staff attended the 53rd annual Taste of Maryland Ag Dinner at Maryland Live in Anne Arundel County. More than 800 agriculturalists and 40+ legislators attended along with the new Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and many of their cabinet members.

Lastly, the MDFB Day in Annapolis is sold out and will have more than 145 farmers in town to meet and eat with many of the legislators next week. Thanks for the huge number of registrants for this year. We have the largest number registered in the past 10 years.

The Hotline will be posted on the [MDFB website](#) each week. Maryland Farm Bureau members are urged to contact their legislators and members of the

relevant committees in support of Maryland Farm Bureau's positions on the bills. Visit Maryland Farm Bureau's [action center](#) to stay up to date on bills we have taken a position on.

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

SB86: Rifles and Shotguns – Possession – Age Requirement (Raise the Age Act of 2023)

Senator Waldstreicher, JPR at 1:00 PM

This bill would increase minimum age for the sale and ownership of a rifle or shotgun to 21 years old. There are areas of exemption for a minor to possess a rifle or shotgun, but they won't be able to purchase and own one until 21. One that violates this law would be convicted of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum of 5 years or a fine not to exceed \$10,000 or both.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: 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**

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

SB310: Natural Resources - Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund - Uses

Senator West, B&T at 1:00 PM

This bill alters the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund to authorize grants from the Fund to be made for projects that reduce conflicts between black bears and humans. It renames the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund to be the Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund. The bill increases the minimum and maximum amounts of reimbursement from the Fund per person annually authorized for damage caused by black bears from \$200 to \$500 and \$3,000 to \$5,000. It also requires a minimum of \$50,000 be available annually for the reimbursement of black bear damage.

Lastly, it requires the Governor to include at least \$1,000,000 in the annual budget bill for the Fund. Currently, there is very little funding in the program and the funding sources are through private donations and the sales of a bear portrait by DNR. This bill would put funding into a much needed program for farmers and landowners that have damage from black bears.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to control the black bear population in our state. We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by wildlife.

Maryland Farm Bureau will be requesting two amendments to the bill. We ask for the amount of the reimbursement fund be increased to \$75,000 annually and the minimum amount of the reimbursement requirement be eliminated so smaller damages aren't excluded from being reimbursed.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

[HB152: Department of Agriculture - Urban Agriculture Grant Fund](#)
Delegate Wells, E&T at 1:30 PM

This bill expands the purpose and scope of the Urban Agriculture Grant Program and the Urban Agriculture Grant Fund, which are administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). First, the bill expands the scope of the program to apply to agricultural producers in an urban area, rather than just Baltimore City. Second, the bill expands the purpose and authorized uses of the fund to provide grants to qualified applicants, rather than just nonprofit organizations in Baltimore City. From fiscal 2025 through 2029, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$250,000 to the fund. The bill also makes various changes to provisions governing regulations that MDA must adopt relating to the grant program.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

[HB230: Department of the Environment - Zero-Emission Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles - Regulations \(Clean Trucks Act of 2023\)](#)
Delegate Love, E&T at 1:30 PM

This bill requires the state, by December 1, 2023, to enact the California Air Resources Board's vehicle standards which establishes the requirements for the sale of new zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles in the state. Since these standards do not include any requirements for implementing the needed charging infrastructure to meet this new demand, the industry will be at the mercy of truck stops and rest areas to offer charging options. Currently, there are no initiatives or programs being made available for the necessary charging infrastructure to be able to meet this sales mandate. Until proper charging infrastructure is in the pipeline to be built, the state should not move forward with these types of sales mandates. Medium and heavy

duty trucks require significantly more vehicle miles traveled than the typical light duty electric vehicle. Therefore, expecting the same implementation as the passenger vehicle is not realistic and shouldn't be required. Agriculture is affected as farmers need to move their crops, livestock, poultry and ag products from the farm to the processing facilities. This requires travel on highways, which would make those vehicles required under this proposed law.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: We oppose any legislation or state regulation that would mandate the use of zero emissions medium-and heavy-duty trucks and farm equipment.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU OPPOSES**

Thursday, February 9, 2023

SB224: Department of the Environment - Zero-Emission Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles - Regulations (Clean Trucks Act of 2023)

Senator Augustine, EEE at 1:00 PM

See bill summary HB230 above.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU OPPOSES**

SB262: Environment - On-Farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption

Senator Gallion, EEE at 1:00 PM

This bill requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish an exemption, by regulation, from the permitting requirements under the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 26.04.11.06 for an on-farm composting facility that (1) uses 40,000 square feet of area or less for active food scrap composting; (2) composts only one or more of a specified list of feedstocks; (3) records the amount and source of feedstock composted, records the date and time the feedstock arrives on the farm, and retains the records for three years; and (4) meets any other conditions specified in regulations. The bill establishes several related definitions.

Current regulations limit a farmer to up to 5,000 square feet for on-farm composting. This bill looks to increase that to 40,000 square feet and also allow the incorporation of food scraps to the feedstock used in the compost pile. To meet the new demand for removing food scraps from the landfill,

farmers will need to do their part to assist. However, being limited to 5,000 sf before requiring extensive permitting requirements, prevents most farmers from being able to participate.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: We support the right for Maryland farmers to make and process mulch and compost from both on and off the farm sources.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS**

HB68: Electricity – Net Energy Metering – Accrual of Net Excess Generation (Net Metering Flexibility Act)

Delegate Korman, ECM at 1:00 PM

This bill does two things. It moves the year end billing cycle from the end of April to the end of August. However, the primary focus of the bill is to create the ability to accrue net excess generation indefinitely instead of just until the year end billing cycle. A net energy generator can still decide to remain on the year by year system and be paid the dollar value of the excess energy produced for the year. However, if the net energy generator decides to take the indefinite accrual option, all excess net energy accrued shall be forfeited at the time the account is closed.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS**

Committees & Room Numbers:

Senate: Budget & Taxation (B&T), 3 West Miller; Education, Energy and the Environment (EEE), 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
