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Legislative Wrap Up

April 21, 2023

Welcome to the final Hotline of the 2023 legislative session. This Hotline will break down the 44 bills that MDFB testified on in either the House, the Senate or both. The bills are separated by the bills that passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature and the bills that didn't pass this year. MDFB opposed eight bills and were able to kill four of them while amending the other four to a point where MDFB removed its opposition to those bills. Of the 36 bills MDFB supported, 18 passed. This includes a very generous budget for the ag community and the ag agencies. Even with this being the first session of a new administration and nearly one third of the legislature being new, Maryland agriculture fared very well and should be looked at as a successful session. Two of MDFB's priority bills passed which should assist many farmers in the future. One is the Urban ag grant program that now provides state funds and technical assistance to urban farmers across the state. The second is the creation of a value-added ag specialist within the Department of Agriculture which will focus on assisting farmers through the numerous county, state and federal government roadblocks when looking to build value-added food and meat processing facilities in the state.

Even with a successful legislative session, there are still opportunities for improvement. MDFB will continue to work with key legislators and the new administration to see if there is a solution to the State Department of Assessment and Taxation's excessive assessments of certain value-added barns and structures on farms. MDFB will also work to get a solution to the farm electricity sales and use tax burden that many farmers struggle with every year even though some farmers are exempt along with many manufacturers in the state.

As always, MDFB will continue to be the voice for Maryland agriculture both during session and throughout the year. Make sure to participate in your county Farm Bureau's legislative farm tours this summer so you can visit with your elected officials and make sure your story is heard. To

learn more about how you can be involved in Maryland Farm Bureau's grassroots policy development process, [click here](#).

2023 Passed Bills:

HB32/SB124: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Delegate Charkoudian and Senator Hester

This bill tweaks the current law to create the Office of Resilience within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management. This department will provide the staffing for the council. As amended, the bill also added a representative from the seafood industry to the council. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB152: Department of Agriculture - Urban Agriculture Grant Programs - Alterations

Delegate Wells

As amended, 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 at least \$100,000 to the fund. The bill also makes various changes to provisions governing regulations that MDA must adopt relating to the grant program. The bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB200: Budget Bill (Fiscal Year 2024)

The Speaker (By Request - Administration)

House bill passed and fully funded MDA, MARBIDCO, SMADC and RMC. The Budget also included \$825,000 for the Maryland Agriculture Fair Board and \$150,000 for the Venison Donation Grant Fund.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB230/SB224: Department of the Environment - Zero-Emission Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles - Regulations (Clean Trucks Act of 2023)

Delegate Love and Senator Augustine

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. The bill passed both chambers with amendments to require a needs assessment and deployment plan to be done by MDE and if the necessary infrastructure is not in place by 2027, then MDE can delay the implementation of this program for one or more years. With negotiations to ensure these amendments were included in the bill, MDFB removed its opposition as amended. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

**MDFB REMOVED OPPOSITION
WITH AMENDMENTS**

HB253/SB262: Environment - On-Farm Composting Facilities - Permit Exemption

Delegate Shetty and Senator Gallion

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 operator of an on-farm composting facility that (1) uses 10,000 square feet (2) 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 specified source-separated organics composted, records the date and time the source-separated organics arrives on the farm, retains the records for five years, and provides the records to MDE on request; and (4) meets any other conditions specified in regulations. The bill also requires MDE's composting facility regulations to require that a new composting facility be constructed and operated in accordance with specified requirements. Finally, the bill establishes several related definitions and a reporting requirement for MDE. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS**

HB319/SB158: Pesticides - PFAS Testing - Study

Delegate Stein and Senator Hettleman

This bill was changed to a study bill instead of a ban bill. The Maryland Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and the Health Department are to review the PFAS testing methods and determine which, if any are EPA validated to be used when testing pesticides. They are to submit a report to the general assembly with their findings. The agriculture stakeholders weren't opposing removing the PFAS of concern from pesticides, but instead

opposed they inaccurate testing methods the bill was requiring be used. Until validated tests are available, there is no accurate way to determine whether there is PFAS of concern in pesticides or not. MDFB removed it's opposition to the bill after it was changed to a study. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

**MDFB REMOVED OPPOSITION
WITH AMENDMENTS**

HB378/SB310: Natural Resources - Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund - Uses

Delegate Love and Senator West

As amended, 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 Prevention and Reimbursement Fund. The bill increases the maximum amounts of reimbursement from the Fund per person annually authorized for damage caused by black bears from \$3,000 to \$5,000. It also requires a minimum of 10% of the fund be available annually for the reimbursement of black bear damage. Lastly, it requires the Governor to include at least \$50,000 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. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS**

HB389/SB34: Department of Agriculture - State Specialist for Value-Added Agriculture

Delegate T Morgan and Senator Hester

This bill establishes a State Specialist for Value-Added Agriculture as a position in the Department of Agriculture. Value-added agriculture means (1) the alteration of a raw agricultural product in a way that increases the product's worth to a consumer and brings more revenue to a farmer, producer, or processor; and (2) includes all enterprises in which an agricultural business or the agricultural business's products are altered, marketed, produced, or processed in a way that adds income to a farmer, producer, or processor. The state ombudsman for value-added agriculture shall: (1) serve as the primary point of contact for individuals engaging in, or interested in engaging in, value-added agriculture in the state; (2) provide information regarding state and federal regulations relating to value-added agriculture; (3) act as a liaison between state and federal partners involved in value-added agriculture; and (4) perform any other duty or function that supports value-added agriculture in the state, as required by the secretary. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB466: Worcester County - Natural Resources - Hunting

Delegate Otto

This bill adds Worcester County to a list of counties in the state that would allow all day Sunday hunting for both game birds and game mammals during the allowed hunting seasons in the county. It also reduces the archery safety zone from 150 yards to 50 yards. The bill passed amended to include the 10:30 AM hunting restriction and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB525: Outdoor Preschool License Pilot Program - Establishment

Delegate Guyton

This bill establishes the Outdoor Preschool License Pilot Program in the State Department of Education to license outdoor, nature-based early learning and child care programs. The purpose of the programs is to expand access to affordable, high-quality early learning and child-care programs and investigate the benefits of outdoor, nature-based classrooms. The bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB551: Office of Statewide Broadband - Study of Broadband Expansion Incentives

The Speaker (By Request - Administration)

This Administration bill requires the Office of Statewide Broadband (OSB) within the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to study and make recommendations regarding (1) how the State can incentivize broadband service providers to expand broadband infrastructure to communities that are unserved or underserved, including through either regulatory or financial incentives; (2) how the State can ensure that federal broadband infrastructure grants are deployed to best serve the needs of Marylanders; and (3) how other states have encouraged private investment in broadband networks and how the State might implement similar measures. OSB must submit its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2024. This bill passed and was signed into law by the Governor.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

[HB556/SB516: Cannabis Reform](#)

Delegate Wilson and Senator Feldman

This omnibus cannabis reform bill passed both chambers and does several things. It renames the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission to be the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission. It establishes a regulatory and licensing system for adult-use cannabis and imposes the sales and use tax on the sale of adult-use cannabis. The bill establishes the Cannabis Regulation and Enforcement Division in the Commission and requires the Division, on or before July 1, 2023, to convert medical cannabis licenses to licenses to operate a medical and adult-use cannabis business. As amended, the hemp portions of the bill were improved to not negatively affect the hemp growers and addressed many of the hemp processor's concerns. Because of these amendments being included, MDFB removed its opposition to the bill. One area the MDFB didn't weigh in on was the regulation of the Delta 8,10, and, 12 hemp as this is chemically made and not a natural product made by hemp growers. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

MDFB REMOVED OPPOSITION
WITH AMENDMENTS

[HB584: Income Tax Credit - Food Donations by Qualified Farms - Sunset Repeal and Alterations \(Farmers Feeding Families Act\)](#)

Delegate Ebersole

As amended, this bill permanently extends the State income tax credit for eligible food donations by qualified farms. Under current law, the tax credit terminates after tax year 2023. In addition, the bill increases the value of the credit from 50% to 100% of the value of eligible food donations and from 75% to 100% of the value of donated certified organic produce (subject to an existing \$5,000 limit). The fund is still limited to \$100,000 with a first come first serve format. Finally, the bill states that it is the intent of the General Assembly that the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) continue to fund the marketing of the credit program and facilitate the donation of eligible food donations by qualified farms, as specified. The bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

[HB723/SB526: Natural Resources – Forest Preservation and Retention](#)

Delegate Love and Senator Elfreth

This bill modifies State law relating to forest preservation and retention by (1) modifying the State's policy to encourage the retention and sustainable management of forest lands; (2) making various changes under the Forest Conservation Act (FCA); and (3) requiring the Department of

Natural Resources (DNR) to establish a workgroup to evaluate and recommend incentives for private landowners to conserve forest. The bill was amended to also include the grandfather clause needed to allow incomplete forest banking easements to be completed. This was MDFB's amendment. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU
SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT

HB908: Electricity - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program and Property Taxes

Delegate Clippinger

Currently the community solar program is under a pilot status. This bill makes the Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Pilot Program a permanent program. The bill also defines "agrivoltaics" to mean the simultaneous use of areas of land for both solar power generation and agriculture. The bill also removes the requirement for a facility over two megawatts and up to five megawatts to not have to go before the Public Service Commission and receive a Certificate of Public Convenience & Necessity (CPCN). The bill was amended to further define agrivoltaics which was the MDFB amendment. This bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU
SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT

HB950/SB836: Maryland Native Plants Program

Delegate Stein and Senator Brooks

This bill establishes the Maryland Native Plants Program to encourage and promote the use and sale of plants native to Maryland at retail garden centers and wholesale nurseries and to educate the public on native plants. It requires the University of Maryland Extension to administer the Program in coordination with the Department of Agriculture and requires the University of Maryland Extension to hire an extension agent to serve as a native plant specialist. One issue with the bill is that it excludes cultivars and hybrids as native plants. The bill was amended to remove this exclusion, which was MDFB's amendment. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU
SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT

HB983/SB327: Hunting, Wildlife Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation - Funding, Promotion, Management, Licenses, Permits, and Stamps

Delegate Allen and Senator Elfreth

As amended, this comprehensive wildlife management and hunting bill does many things. First, it cleans up the landowner liability language to ensure a landowner has proper liability coverage if they allow hunters to hunt on their land. Secondly, it establishes the Wildlife Conservation, Education, and Outreach Program to provide outreach and foster an interest in outdoor recreation and stewardship, hunting, and wildlife conservation. Next, it establishes a stamp for hunting sika deer. One of the biggest parts of the bill is it increased the fees for many of the hunting licenses and stamps. These fees haven't been increased in 36 years. The increased fees are to generate the needed funding for DNR to qualify for the available USDA matching funds that the department is currently receiving. This additional funding will allow DNR's Wildlife services division to provide the needed food habitats in Wildlife Management Areas along with starting a farmer cost-share program to plant private land forage crops (AKA sacrificial crops) to help curb the crop loss on farms due to wildlife damage. The bill was also amended to remove the Sunday waterfowl hunting part of the bill. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU
SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT

HB987/SB672: Alcoholic Beverages – Use of Alcoholic Beverages for Educational Purposes

Delegate Valderrama and Senator Klausmeier

This bill authorizes college students who are at least 18 years old and under the age of 21 years to taste the alcoholic beverages while participating in a course or program in enology, fermenting, brewing, or hospitality and tourism offered by a qualified institution of higher education without criminal penalty to the student, instructor, or institution of higher education. Both bills passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB1087: Wicomico County - Sunday Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones

Wicomico County Delegation

This bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to allow a person to hunt game birds and mammals on each Sunday of the game bird and game mammal seasons in Wicomico County. It also authorizes the Department to allow Sunday hunting in Wicomico County on public land designated for hunting by the Department and adds Wicomico County to the list of counties in which the safety zone for archery hunters is 50 yards. Bill was amended to include the 10:30 AM hunting restriction. This bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

SB1: Criminal Law - Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting Firearms - Restrictions (Gun Safety Act of 2023)

Senator Waldstreicher

Before this bill passed both chambers, it was significantly amended to open up more areas to wear and carry, including the primary issue the MDFB had with the bill as drafted. As amended, a farmer is allowed to conceal and carry while at farmers markets even if the market is located on public/government property. Because this amendment was included, MDFB removed its opposition to the bill. The bill still does restrict where a legally permitted person can wear and carry. This bill will be taken to court on its constitutionality and many believe that most if not all of the bill will be found unconstitutional.

MDFB REMOVED OPPOSITION
WITH AMENDMENTS

SB143: Electricity - Net Energy Metering and Virtual Net Energy Metering - Accrual of Net Excess Generation (Net Metering Flexibility Act)

Senator Feldman

As amended, this bill authorizes an eligible customer-generator under the State's net metering law to accrue net excess generation for an indefinite period, instead of only for a 12-month period, subject to specified requirements. An electric company must pay the customer-generator for any indefinitely accrued net excess generation within 15 days of the close of a customer's account; the Public Service Commission (PSC) must establish a method for determining the value of such generation. The authorization does not apply to a customer-generator served by a municipal electric utility or an electric cooperative. Subscribers under the Community Solar Energy Generating System Pilot Program are likewise authorized to accrue virtual net excess generation in the same manner as described above, and the credit limitation of 200% of baseline energy usage is removed. This bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

SB434: Natural Resources - Restorative Aquaculture Pilot Program

Senator Klausmeier

This bill would require DNR to establish a pilot program, in consultation with the Aquaculture Coordinating Council and UMCES, to provide incentive payments for aquaculture farmers who maintain conditions on their lease that provide similar ecosystem benefits as restored reef areas. This program would sunset after six years. This would provide an alternative revenue stream for oyster farmers who choose to manage their farms to the standards developed by DNR. This bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

2023 Unsuccessful Bills

HB293/SB12: Corporations and Associations – Annual Report Filing Fees – Electronic Filing Exemption

Delegate Henson and Senator Brooks

This bill exempts business entities from paying the filing fee required with the submission of an annual report to the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) if the annual report is filed electronically. This would include a farm. Bill died in Committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB449/SB323: Calvert County – Sunday Hunting – Repeal of Time Restrictions

Delegate T Morgan and Calvert County Senators

This bill repeals the 10:30 AM restriction during which a person must be out of the woods when hunting on each Sunday of the game bird and game mammal seasons in Calvert County. The Sunday hunting bill passed in 2022 with the 10:30 AM restriction. Bill died in committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB530: Natural Resources – Forest Mitigation Banks and the Forest Conservation Fund – Alterations

Delegate Kerr

This bill adds "applications that were submitted" to the requirement that a forest mitigation bank had to be approved on or before December 31, 2020, to be eligible, and it extends the deadline from two years to five or from three growing seasons to six for the Department of Natural Resources to accomplish the reforestation or afforestation for which certain money is deposited to the Forest Conservation Fund. This bill died in committee because it was added into HB723 which passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

[HB592/SB418](#): Property Tax - Agricultural Land and Improvements - Assessment

Delegate Watson and Senator Elfreth

This bill outlines that value-added agricultural activities are a farm or agricultural use of land for assessment purposes. It defines Value-added agricultural activities as: (I) Agricultural Alcohol Production; (II) Agritourism; (III) Equine Activities; (IV) Value Added Ag products processing from products derived from the farm; (V) Roadside Stands; (VI) other Ag uses that are permissible under local zoning; and (VII) other activities the Secretary of Ag determines are value-added Ag activities. It creates a subclass of real property consisting of improvements on an actively used farm that support value-added agricultural activities and requires these improvements on an actively used farm that support value-added agricultural activities to be assessed at the agricultural use rate. For a few years now, SDAT has reassessed the barns on value-added farms with a significantly higher assessment than years prior. The reasons given is these value-added farms generate more money and the improvements should be assessed as commercial uses instead of agricultural structures. This bill defines these barns and structures used in value-added farms as Ag structures and required to be assessed as such. The bill died in committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

[HB678/SB640](#): Sales and Use Tax - Electricity for Agricultural Purposes - Study and Report

Delegate Sample-Hughes and Senator Jackson

This bill adds to the existing agricultural sales and use tax exemption electricity that is used for agricultural purposes, such as raising livestock and poultry, irrigation, or crop production and grain harvest. Currently, only farms that all their electricity use is tied to the house meter is tax exempt. Electricity use from other farm meters are currently being taxed. This bill exempts these additional farm meters. In addition to residential electricity not being taxed, manufacturing businesses are not taxed. This includes Perdue's processing plant. Agriculture has always been considered manufacturing, so exempting all farm electricity would be consistent with current law. The bill passed the House as a study, but was unable to pass the Senate.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

**[HB718/SB590](#): Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations
(Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2023)**

Delegate Stewart and Senator Lewis Young

This bill alters the definition of "Tier 1 renewable source" for purposes of excluding energy derived from qualifying biomass, methane from the anaerobic decomposition of organic materials, fuel cells, poultry litter-to-energy, waste-to-energy, refuse-derived fuel, and thermal energy from a thermal biomass system from being eligible for inclusion in the renewable energy portfolio

standard. MDFB Policy: We support an additional carve-out in the Maryland RPS for woody biomass, poultry litter and livestock manure to energy generation. Bill died in committee.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU OPPOSES**

HB847/SB447: Anaerobic Digestion Workgroup

Delegate Stein and Senator Carozza

This bill creates an Anaerobic Digestion Workgroup to study, identify, examine, and make recommendations on the aspects of anaerobic digestion in Maryland. There would be 11 members of the workgroup and includes a member of the Maryland Farm Bureau. The workgroup will be staffed by MDA and will study this area and make recommendations on the best options for Maryland. These recommendation will be sent to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 30, 2023. Bill died in committee.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS**

HB928: Motor Vehicles - Off-the-Road Motorcycles - Local Regulation and Enforcement

Delegate Boyce

This bill authorizes a municipal corporation to regulate the operation of and register off-the-road motorcycles. It also authorizes a county or municipal corporation to enforce the Maryland Vehicle Law for violations involving off-the-road motorcycles and to enact and implement legislation governing impoundment, release from impoundment, and, if lawful, forfeiture. Even though this bill's primary intent is to crack down on off-road vehicles being driven illegally on the roads and out-running law enforcement, the bill also include farm use off-road vehicles. Requiring those vehicles to be registered with the county. Since farm-use vehicles aren't the intended vehicles for this bill, MDFB requests an exemption for farm-use off-road vehicles from the bill. Bill died in committee.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU
SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT**

HB934/SB779: Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs - Authorization

Delegate Hutchinson and Senator Mautz

This bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to allow a person, for the management of the deer population in the State, to sponsor, conduct, or participate in an existing, random contest in the State held during the month of January that has the objective of harvesting a female deer. Bill died on the House floor during SignEDie.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU
SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT

HB954: Natural Resources - Hunting - Tundra Swans

Delegate Hornberger

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to establish an annual tundra swan hunting season if authorized by federal law. It requires the Department to request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorize an annual tundra swan hunting season in the State and provide the Department and requires the Department to distribute tundra swan permits annually using a lottery-based system. Bill dies in committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

HB1067/SB508: Hemp Farming Program – Use of Hemp and Hemp Products in Consumable Products

Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo and Senator Elfreth

This bill alters the definitions of "hemp" and "hemp product" in provisions of law relating to the Hemp Farming Program. It also authorizes a person that produces hemp or a hemp product in accordance with the Program to include the hemp or hemp product in consumable products for sale by the person if the product is tested by an independent testing laboratory to ensure the product meets applicable safety standards and the delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of the hemp product does not exceed 0.3 on a dry weight basis. The bill died in the House committee because it was incorporated into SB516 - Cannabis Reform bill.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU
SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT

HB1118/SB777: Middle Shore Counties - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions

Delegate Hutchinson and Senator Mautz

This bill repeals the 10:30 AM restriction during which a person must be out of the woods when hunting on each Sunday of the game bird and game mammal seasons in Caroline County, Dorchester County, Talbot County, and Wicomico County. The Sunday hunting bill passed in 2022 with the 10:30 AM restriction. Bill died in committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

[HB1139: Solid Waste Disposal and Diversion and On-Farm Composting and Compost Use](#)
Delegate Boyce

This bill establishes a \$2 per ton statewide solid waste disposal surcharge (adjusted for inflation as specified) and a process by which counties may submit a request to establish a local solid waste disposal surcharge program that meets specified requirements. The statewide surcharge does not apply in a county that has established a local program. The statewide surcharge is collected by owners and operators of refuse disposal systems, remitted to the Comptroller, and deposited into a newly established Waste Reduction Grants Fund. Generally, the Comptroller must transfer the revenue into (1) the new On-Farm Composting and Compost Use Grant Fund administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and (2) the existing State Recycling Trust Fund within the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Broadly speaking, the surcharge revenue collected under the bill – through the statewide surcharge or through a local program – is used to provide funding for various recycling, composting, waste prevention, and solid waste reduction projects. Bill died in committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

[HB1204: Hemp Farming Program - Refined Hemp and Hemp Extract Products - Requirements](#)
Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo

This bill requires a person to receive a certificate of analysis before distributing refined hemp or a hemp extract product in the State. It requires the Department of Agriculture to establish packaging and labeling requirements for refined hemp and hemp extract products and establishes the Hemp Advisory Council to provide advice and expertise regarding the monitoring and regulation of hemp production under the Hemp Farming Program. Bill died in committee.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU
SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENT

[HB1214: Residential Retail Electricity - Green Power - Renewable Energy Credits and Marketing Claims](#)
Delegate Stein

This bill requires an electricity supplier, beginning January 1, 2024, to purchase renewable energy credits (RECs) for each year the electricity supplier offers “green power” for sale to residential customers. The electricity supplier must include a related disclosure about the source of the green power in its marketing materials. An annual reporting requirement for electricity suppliers is updated to include the amount and types of generation associated with RECs purchased in accordance with the bill during the reporting period. Even though it wasn't the reason for the bill, the primary concern with this bill is that it would remove other types of

renewable energy sources other than wind and solar when it came to what the energy companies were to promote. The bill passed the House, but died in the Senate committee.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU OPPOSES**

HB1262/SB437: Aquaculture - Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission, Oyster Advisory Commission, and Leases

Delegate Stein and Senator Klausmeier

This bill would 1) alter the membership of the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission and Oyster Advisory Commission to add 2 additional aquaculture industry members on each, 2) require that DNR process a lease application that has received no protests against it within 6 months, and 3) require DNR to work with other relevant state agencies to identify state-owned properties adjacent to which aquaculture leasing could be appropriate. The goal is to streamline the leasing process and ensure the aquaculture industry has sufficient representation to cover their varied industry and interests on relevant advisory boards. Bill died in committee.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS**

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

Senator Waldstreicher

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. Bill died in Committee.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU OPPOSES**

SB103: Income Tax – Maryland Residential Solar Investment Tax Credit

Senator Ellis

This bill creates a nonrefundable State income tax credit for the cost of specified photovoltaic property that is mounted on the rooftop of residential real property owned by the individual. The amount of the credit may not exceed the lesser of (1) \$15,000 or (2) 25% of the installed cost of the photovoltaic property. An individual may not claim the credit for the installation of photovoltaic property for which the individual has also received a specified grant under the Solar Energy Grant Program. The credit may be carried forward up to five years. The Comptroller and the Maryland

Energy Administration (MEA) must jointly adopt regulations to implement the income tax credit. Bill died in committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

SB155: Prince George's County - Natural Resources - Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones

Senator Jackson

This bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow, in Prince George's County, a person to hunt deer on each Sunday of the deer hunting seasons from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January, inclusive. The bill also decreases the archery hunting safety zone in Prince George's County from 150 yards to 50 yards from a dwelling house, residence, church, or any other building or camp occupied by human beings. Bill died in committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

SB433: Economic Development - Woman- and Minority-Owned Shellfish Aquaculture Enterprise Fund

Senator Klausmeier

This bill would create a fund to provide no-interest loans to women- and minority-business owners in the aquaculture sector. Loans up to \$50,000 would be administered by MARBIDCO, which already manages several other aquaculture loan programs. Because it creates a separate fund for this purpose, it does not impact or take funding away from any existing programs. The intent is to increase opportunities for groups underrepresented in the seafood/aquaculture industry by reducing financial barriers to entry. Bill died in committee.

MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU SUPPORTS

SB690: Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions

Senator Lewis Young

This bill bans the use of cages in egg-laying farms in Maryland starting January 1, 2025. The economic impact to an existing farm to make these changes is a 41% increase in cost of production to retrofit the existing barns and a 119% increase in labor. By moving to a cage-free

operation, the hen mortality rate increases significantly due to more bacterial habitat being introduced in the barn. Lastly, these farms are contracted with out of state companies that will just drop their contracts with the farms and then these farms will have to create a new demand for their eggs in a market where there is already an over supply of cage-free eggs. This bill would put the few egg-laying farms, that farm this way, out of business. Bill died in committee.

**MARYLAND FARM
BUREAU OPPOSES**

SB866: Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation
Senator Zucker

This bill requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill beginning in fiscal year 2025 an appropriation for the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc. that is calculated based on the amount of revenue lost if/when special vehicle registration plates are created. Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation (MAEF) receives funding from the sale and registration of the Ag tags. The Chesapeake Bay Trust also receives funding from the Bay tag. Currently, these are the only two special vehicle registration plates. If there were to be more plates created, the fund source would go down because of the added type of plates. This bill seeks to make sure MAEF and CBT receive level funding if their revenue from the plate sales go down. This bill died in committee.

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Maryland Department of Agriculture to Host Deer Summit

The Maryland Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Department of Natural Resources, will host a Deer Summit on Thursday, May 11, 2023 at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401. The summit will run from 10 am to 2 pm, with a light lunch sponsored by Horizon Farm Credit. [Register here.](#)



Join the Maryland Department of Agriculture and partner agencies for a **DEER SUMMIT**

Thursday, May 11, 2023
10 am - 2 pm
MDA Headquarters
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

Light lunch provided by Horizon Farm Credit

Presentation & Panel Topics Include
Crop Damage • Hunting & Management
Deer Processing • Feeding the Hungry
Lyme & Other Diseases • Automobile Strikes

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