



Maryland Farm Bureau

2024 Policy Book

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1 **FOREWORD**

2 Farm Bureau, the voice of agriculture, is a free, independent, non-governmental
3 voluntary association of farm families and those with related interest.

4 Farm Bureau is local, statewide, national, and international in its scope and influence. It
5 is non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character. It is organized to provide a means
6 by which farmers can work together toward the goals upon which they agree. It is wholly
7 controlled by its members and is financed by dues covering county, state, and national
8 membership, paid annually by each member family.

9 Farm Bureau policies stem from our belief that agriculture in Maryland is an essential
10 industry necessary to maintain the viability of our state. Farm families discuss issues, talk them
11 over in the community and make recommendations. County resolutions derived from these
12 community recommendations were adopted as policies on county issues and as
13 recommendations on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies
14 herein were derived from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm
15 Bureau policy for 2024 as set by voting delegates 108th annual convention of the Maryland
16 Farm Bureau on December 4th, 2023.

17
18 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

19 **Career Technology Education**

20 We support the career technology education program in Maryland. We recommend
21 that local boards of education, with state support, expand Maryland State Department of
22 Education (MSDE) approved agriculture education programs in middle schools and high schools.
23 We strongly recommend that the State board of education institute a more comprehensive
24 agriculture education program. '21

25 We highly recommend MDFB have representation on boards and commissions at the
26 Maryland State Department of Education, and the Department of Labor especially in Career &
27 Technology Education. '21

28 We support the Environmental, Agriculture & Natural Resources Pathway (Certified
29 Agriculture Education Program). The program should include all three rings of the Agriculture
30 Education model (classroom/laboratory instruction, FFA, and Supervised Agricultural
31 Experiences) and be fully funded and staffed to ensure all local and state programs are viable.
32 '22

33 We support ag teachers receiving extra duty contracts to cover extracurricular duties.
34 '22

35 **Colleges & Universities**

36 We urge the introduction or expansion of agricultural programs in colleges and
37 universities throughout the state. '21

38 Maryland should fund the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for farmers.
39 '19

40 **Curriculum**

41 We support an effective, systematic instructional program about agriculture in our
42 public schools. We believe the curriculum should include "Introduction to Agriculture Science"
43 starting in elementary school and continuing into middle school and high school to generate
44 awareness of the importance of agriculture to our society and to ensure future generations of
45 well-trained leaders for the agricultural industry. '19

46 We urge the public and private schools to implement a MSDE approved agricultural
47 education program that is available to all students. '21

48 We support MAEF's efforts to partner with stakeholders, including county public school
49 systems, farmers, and allies, to expand agricultural education in the State of Maryland. '19

50 We commend the Maryland Commission on Education in Agriculture for its study and
51 report concerning the enhancement of agricultural education in the state. We support the
52 Commission's recommendations to improve and enhance education in agricultural programs
53 throughout Maryland, especially the improved agricultural curriculum in Grades Pre-K-12 and
54 the recommendations for new and upgraded facilities. We encourage the continued efforts of
55 the Governor to expand and improve agricultural curriculum in the Maryland public school
56 system. '20

57 We support increased funding for Pre-K through 12th grade agricultural education
58 programs. Funds should be used for program development and improvement, staff
59 development, curriculum including CASE (Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education), Career
60 & Technology Education and extended day/year employment. We strongly support Ag science
61 teachers who provide student leadership in FFA and supervised agricultural experience as
62 components of the program. '19

63 We support the State of Maryland becoming an FFA affiliated State. '19

64 We oppose the expenditure of public funds to promote animal rights and the use of
65 educational materials in public schools that discourage the use of animal products. '19

66 We urge the state to include ag education in current environmental curriculums. '20

67 We support advancing and implementing The Blueprint for Agricultural Education, as
68 authored by MDFB, Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation, and Maryland Agriculture
69 Teachers Association, as consistent with The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, specifically the
70 Pillar 3, College and Career Readiness initiative. '23

71 In order to achieve the goal of educating students in the vast career pathways within
72 agriculture, we support the needed personnel to administer and manage implementation of
73 The Blueprint for Agricultural Education along with the necessary funding to expand certified
74 agriculture education not only in the high schools and career & technology centers, but also
75 into the middle schools. '23

76 As part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, MDFB supports agriculture education
77 curricula as a focus of urban Community Schools. Community Schools must serve as hubs of
78 coordinated community support partnerships that bring families, communities, and partners
79 together to teach urban agriculture, build indoor grow areas and build outdoor Urban Farm
80 classrooms in elementary schools, to develop new and beginner urban farmers and promote
81 food security at an early age. '23

82 **Environmental & Agricultural Literacy Requirements**

83 We urge the state to create an "Ag Education for All" program that would allow all
84 students open access to agriculture programs in their school district which could include virtual
85 learning and/or transportation for all educational institutions. '20

86 We support and encourage on-farm field trips for all Pre-K-12 school systems to
87 experience the daily life of the farm. '20

88 The public needs to be made aware of the importance of the preservation of agricultural
89 land for a totally healthy environment. We encourage more farm city festivals, including farm
90 tours and educational displays so the public can have a better understanding of how food is
91 produced. '19

92 We recommend that curriculum for environmental & agricultural literacy as a
93 requirement for graduation be reviewed by MAEF. '21

94 MDFB recommends that environmental science curriculum be science-based and not
95 disparage agriculture. Science curriculums should reflect modern agricultural practices
96 including conservation practices, nutrient management, water quality enhancement, carbon
97 sequestration and best use land practices. '23

98 **Funding for MAEF & Ag Education**

99 We support the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation and its efforts to receive
100 legislative funding from the state special fund appropriations and funding through grant-in-aid
101 from the Maryland State Department of Education. '19

102 We support the Maryland Ag Tag, and we believe that all fees derived from sales should
103 continue to be used to support MAEF. '19

104 We further urge the state to restructure the funding formula for public education. '19

105 We oppose increasing the number of commemorative license plates beyond the
106 Maryland Ag Tag and Chesapeake Bay Tag. '21

107 **Teacher Training**

108 We recommend that training of teachers for Maryland public and private K-12 schools
109 and colleges include a mini-course in agriculture, and that state educational subdivisions
110 include an in-service day or days to instruct teachers and guidance counselors about agriculture
111 and careers in agriculture. '21

112 **State FFA**

113 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education to dedicate
114 guaranteed funding and to fully fund staffing for Maryland FFA administration. '22

115 We recommend expanding MSDE approved agriculture education programs and FFA
116 into middle schools. '21

117 We support the State of Maryland becoming an FFA affiliated State. '21

118 **Legislature Education**

119 We support and encourage Maryland State legislators to learn more about Maryland
120 agriculture through building relationships with Maryland farmers and encourage more farm
121 visits. '20

122 **AGRICULTURAL FAIRS**

124 We support an increase in funds to the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board (MAFB) to be
125 used to promote and assist agricultural fairs, 4-H exhibits, FFA and other qualifying agricultural
126 events. '21

127 We oppose restrictions or bans on the types of animals that are shown at state, county,
128 and community agricultural fairs, shows and exhibitions. '21

129 **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION**

131 We support the concept of agricultural land preservation and urge all landowners to
132 acquaint themselves with the programs available and the benefits derived thereof.
133 Furthermore, we urge the state and county governments to continue to support the voluntary
134 preservation of agricultural land with substantial increases in funding. We encourage them to
135 work with all interested stakeholders to develop innovative voluntary programs that maximize
136 farmland preservation while protecting landowner equity and private property rights and not
137 negatively impacting any other rights running with the land. '21

138 We strongly urge MALPF continue to be under the control and oversight of the Maryland
139 Secretary of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '21

140 We oppose taking productive agricultural land out of production for the purpose of
141 meeting requirements for forest conservation, buffers, and mitigation measures. The state
142 should conduct a survey to determine the loss of acreage of food producing land for these
143 purposes. '21

144 We encourage neighboring counties to work cooperatively to achieve agland
145 preservation goals provided county sovereignty is respected and all planning and zoning
146 decisions are made at the county level. '21

147 We support the Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation and county preservation
148 boards in their efforts to preserve agricultural land throughout the state. Furthermore, we urge
149 that these boards maintain the right to select land eligible for easement sale with priority
150 toward creating large contiguous blocks of preserved land. '21

151 The decision to target priority farms should be left to the county's agriculture land
152 preservation board under the current MALPF funding formula. '21

153 We support the right for farms currently enrolled in ag land preservation programs to be
154 competitive with other farms and allowed to offer innovative agritourism options. '21

155 We support sustainable forest management on preserved agricultural land. '21

156 **Ag Preservation Funding**

157 We urge full funding by the state and counties for agriculture land preservation
158 programs, including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program.
159 Payments for these programs should reflect current market values for farmland. '21

160 Farming and Silviculture that generates a profit should be an allowed use on agricultural
161 land purchased by the state, county, or municipalities. '21

162 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '21

163 We support permanent annual funding of MARBIDCO's Next Generation Farmland
164 Acquisition Program. '21

165 We oppose transfer and/or use of funds set aside for agricultural land preservation for
166 anything other than the preservation of farmland. '21

167 We oppose any attempt to cap all transfer tax funds used for agricultural land
168 preservation programs. '21

169 We support a line on state income tax returns to allow taxpayers to donate funds to the
170 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to preserve farmland. '21

171 Furthermore, we recommend that additional county and state incentives for
172 participation should be provided, such as property tax credits for agricultural district properties
173 committed to a term of five years or property tax credits on land where easements have been
174 purchased, and the enactment of a Maryland agricultural land property tax credit program as
175 part of the contract. '21

176 **Appraisals**

177 We urge the state to use local appraisers who should base their appraisals on the recent
178 sale or transfer of property in the immediate vicinity. We also believe that the appraisers
179 should be required to successfully complete a course of study specifically on agricultural land
180 appraisal approved by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. Furthermore,
181 appraisers should be required to take into consideration the value of standing timber, the
182 subdivision value of any property, as well as the uniqueness of the metropolitan areas when
183 making their appraisals. '21

184 **Mapping**

185 We oppose the identification and inclusion of state and county Ag land preservation
186 easement properties in land use and public facilities maps. Where so included and identified,
187 such areas should be prominently labeled as private property. '21

188 **Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation**

189 For the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) to operate more
190 efficiently, we believe that the Maryland General Assembly should develop a permanent annual
191 allotment for the Agricultural Land Preservation Program. We also believe the following
192 changes should be made:

- 193 (1) We direct MALPF to allow other forms of income when it does not interfere with the
194 present agriculture operation or change the agricultural capabilities of the land including
195 expanded permitted uses such as ag tourism and value-added operations. '21
- 196 (2) We support the right of value-added agricultural businesses on MALPF land to sell products
197 not produced or grown on the farm as a secondary attraction (e.g. sandwiches, t-shirts,
198 small gifts). '21
- 199 (3) We recommend that farms be allowed into the MALPF program without regard to mineral
200 rights issues. '21
- 201 (4) We strongly urge MALPF to permit the onsite extraction of gas from farmland under MALPF
202 easement '21

203 **Other Methods to Preserve Agriculture Land**

204 As another step toward preservation of agricultural land, we propose legislation to
205 create an Agricultural Land Condemnation Board, chaired by the State's Secretary of
206 Agriculture. Before anyone can condemn any productive agricultural lands for any purpose, the
207 involved body must appeal to the board. The board must determine that there is no
208 reasonable or prudent alternative. '21

209 We oppose the condemnation of prime and productive farmland for government
210 mandated mitigation projects without prior approval by the Agriculture Land Condemnation
211 Board. '21

212 **Transfer Development Rights**

213 We oppose the conveyance of Transferable Development Rights across county lines. '21

214 **Zoning**

215 We recommend that every county review their agricultural zoning and its impact on the
216 equity of landowners. '21

217 We support the preservation of agricultural land and equity through the process of
218 donating, purchasing, and transferring development rights. However, state mandated down-
219 zoning is totally unacceptable. We support local zoning authority only. '21

220 We recommend that state required land use planning documents for Parks & Recreation
221 and Ag Preservation be prepared separately. '21

222 We recommend when any land is enrolled for ag preservation, the land be downzoned
223 to agriculture zoning. '21

224

225

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

226 We encourage and support the passage of legislation to help resource-based industries
227 and alternative or value-added enterprises. We encourage the state to coordinate laws and
228 regulations with contiguous states. '10

229 On-farm value-added processing of agricultural products should be considered a part of
230 normal agricultural practices. '09

231 We support the right for Maryland farmers to make and process mulch and compost
232 from both on and off the farm sources. '14

233 We encourage MDA to work with state and county agencies to coordinate uniform
234 statewide rules concerning the marketing of locally produced meat, dairy and poultry products
235 at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and farm commissaries in non-commercial agricultural
236 buildings. '04

237 We encourage the State and USDA to streamline the process to expedite new and
238 expand existing custom butcher shops and livestock processing facilities. '20

239 We support the reinstatement of the State inspection program for local livestock
240 processing facilities to support direct sale to consumers. '20

241 We support State Certified cut and wrap facilities to meet consumer demand for local
242 meat products. '20

243 We encourage the state to work with USDA to develop a process by which locally
244 produced and processed meat and poultry can be shipped within and across state lines. This
245 may include the state investing in MDA meat inspectors to provide the necessary oversight at
246 custom butcher shops. '22

247 We support the development of regional or travelling meat processing facilities to
248 accommodate producers in all areas of the state and reduce the need to transport animals to
249 out-of-state processors. '13.

250 We support legislation and improvements in regulations that allow farm breweries more
251 opportunities for direct consumer sales. '11

252 We support agritainment as an acceptable use of agricultural land. '13

253 Agritourism should be defined as activities conducted on a farm and offered to the
254 public or to invited groups for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in
255 the farm operation.'14

256 We support wedding and event venues as an accessory use on a working farm '16

257 We support incidental outdoor stays as an accessory use on a working farm.

258 Regulations and approvals should be addressed on a county-by-county basis. '21

259 We encourage landowners to clearly define property boundaries for Agritourism
260 activities. '21

261 We oppose production of synthetically produced 'meats' being labeled as meat. '19

262 We support legislation to allow utility cooperatives to apply for grants to extend
263 broadband service to underserved rural areas. '19

264 We encourage the State of Maryland to review the regulation of Cottage Kitchens and
265 expand their capabilities as appropriate. '20

266

267 **AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION**

268 We urge MDE to consider all agricultural water withdrawal permits in use before
269 increasing water withdrawal permits or approving new water withdrawal permits for
270 municipalities or subdivisions when these lands coincide. '23

271 We urge MDA, MDE and DNR to work with the U.S. Geological Survey in updating
272 computer models for Maryland's underground aquifers. '23

273 We oppose any fees for permits or any fees for agriculture water use in the state. '23

274 We oppose the mandatory use of flow meters on Ag Water appropriation usage
275 permits. '23

276 Under the State Water Application Law, MDE is the only agency that may restrict water
277 usage in Maryland. We believe MDE should continue to be the only authority in this area.

278 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture’s right to use water for irrigation.
279 ‘23
280 We support Agricultural water usage being exempt from any usage control. ‘23
281 We encourage MDE to streamline the agricultural water withdrawal permit process to
282 provide more timely approval. ‘23
283 Under MDE’s water withdrawal permit, a farmer who uses less water than allocated for
284 a given month/year should not be penalized and should not receive a lower water allocation.
285 ‘23
286 When a water appropriation permit hearing is requested by an interested party, MDE
287 should require the interested party to be in attendance in person or virtually during the
288 hearing. If the requesting party fails to appear, the hearing should be dismissed. ‘23
289 We request MDE use "irrigated inches per acre" rather than "gallons per day" when
290 formulating water appropriation permits. ‘23
291 Surface water screening devices should not be required on man-made irrigation ponds.
292 ‘23
293 We urge the state government to designate pond/river screening devices be eligible for
294 cost share. ‘23
295

AIR QUALITY

297 Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of
298 air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when
299 considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. ‘18
300 We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean
301 air (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in
302 reducing equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. ‘18
303 We support a healthy environment, including good air quality, but we are opposed to
304 emission control rules and standards for farm equipment and all on-road vehicles used to
305 transport agriculture commodities to and from the farm that would require the retrofitting of
306 our equipment to meet those standards. ‘22
307 We support the creation of a cost-share program to help farmers adapt to climate
308 change regulations. ‘22
309 We oppose bans on the tools and practices we use to farm. ‘22
310 We oppose exhaust emissions from farm machinery along with dust and particulate
311 matter generated from agricultural activity being subject to the federal Clean Air standards
312 instituted in 1997. ‘18
313 We oppose regulations dealing with exhaust of ammonia or methane gases from all
314 agricultural activities. ‘22
315 We recommend MDE allow the burning of agricultural use buildings. Buildings to be
316 burned should meet safety standards for burning set by county codes. Burning should be
317 supervised by the local fire company. ‘18
318 We encourage MDA to assemble an ag air quality expert panel with the mission to
319 review, vet and validate regional ag emissions research & publications to ensure pertinence to
320 real world conditions. This panel should consist, at minimum of the MD & DE state
321 climatologists, MD & DE extension animal science specialists and representatives from the dairy
322 and poultry associations. ‘18
323 We oppose the creation of a state carbon and/or Greenhouse Gas reduction tax/fee. ‘18
324 We Oppose requiring CAFO’s to install air quality monitoring devices. ‘18

325 We support air quality monitoring data be managed by University of Maryland
326 Extension. '18

327 We oppose any legislation or state regulation that would mandate the use of zero
328 emissions medium and heavy-duty trucks and farm equipment. '22

329

330 **ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES**

331 We recommend legislation be enacted that would require the assignment and
332 prominent display of an identifying number on all ATV's, dirt bikes, etc. '16

333 Furthermore, parents and guardians should be held responsible for damage caused by
334 ATV's ridden by their minor children. '04.

335 Landowners should not be held responsible for injury to riders or damage to ATV's when
336 operated on private lands. '14

337 We recognize the use of all-terrain vehicles as necessary agricultural vehicles in the day-
338 to-day business of agricultural operations. We support a farmer's ability to cross and travel
339 state and county roads to get from one part of his/her farm to another. '21

340

341 **ALCOHOL PRODUCTION – ON FARM**

342 We support the recognition of vineyards & wineries, farm breweries and farm distilleries
343 – and their related activities – as agriculture. '15

344 We support the definition of winery to include vineyards, processing of grapes and other
345 fruit, wine making, storage of wine, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of wine and
346 related products, food service, and other associated activities. '21

347 We support the definition of farm brewery to include agricultural products used for
348 brewing, processing of hops and grains, malting, fermentation, storage of beer, promotional
349 events, tasting rooms, sales of beer and related products, food service, and other associated
350 activities. '15

351 We support the definition of farm distillery to include agricultural products used for
352 distilling, processing of grains and fruit, fermentation and distillation, storage of distilled
353 products, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of distilled and related products, food
354 service, and other associated activities. '15

355 We support the recognition of wineries, farm breweries and farm distilleries as usage of
356 right in agricultural and rural conservation zones if they are an addition to a working farm with
357 home grown and/or locally grown products used in processing. '23

358 We support wineries', farm breweries' and farm distilleries' rights to market their
359 product as broadly and as widely as possible, including in "Farmer's Markets" listed by the
360 Department of Agriculture under annual permits issued by the Office of the Comptroller. '15

361 We support research and funding in cooperation with MDA and UMD that enhances the
362 viability of commercial viticulture, on farm brewing and distilling in Maryland. '15

363 We support brewers' right to supply spent grain to local farmers. '15

364 We support the inclusion of the inventory of grape, hop and brewery grain production in
365 the state in future MDA and NASS agricultural statistical surveys. '15

366

367 **ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS**

368 We support research into cost-effective alternative uses for agricultural commodities
369 including value-added products that would increase demand, and thus, improve marketing
370 potential. '18

371 We support continuing research and development of alternate and renewable energy
372 resources. '18

373 We strongly urge the local, state, and federal government agencies to support new
374 alternative Ag enterprises to aid in market development; and, to provide education so that new
375 enterprises can become viable sources of income in agriculture. '18

376 We support on-farm retail and farmers' markets being exempt from plastic bag bans or
377 taxes that restrict the use of single-use bags '20

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ANIMAL CARE

380 We oppose any legislation that would interfere with the right of farmers to raise
381 livestock and poultry in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices. '18

382 We encourage farmers to be proactive by using voluntary quality and environmental
383 assurance programs. '18

384 We support properly researched and industry-tested poultry and livestock practices that
385 provide consumers with a wholesome food supply and enable farmers to improve the care and
386 management of their animals. '18

387 We oppose any legislation or regulation that would prohibit or unduly restrict the use of
388 animals in agricultural or medical research. '18

389 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in
390 educating the food industry, school children, the public and those elected to represent us in
391 government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,
392 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated
393 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.
394 '18

395 We support the right of farmers to protect their livestock and poultry from predatory
396 animals and birds. '19

397 We recommend that a farm operation suspected of animal cruelty be inspected by a
398 university animal science specialist or licensed veterinarian to determine whether a cruelty
399 situation exists before charges are filed or animals removed from the site. '18

400 We oppose animal rights activism that disrupts farming operations, Ag related activities
401 on and off the farm, fairs, racetracks, livestock sales or research facilities. '18

402 We oppose any initiatives, referendums, or legislation that create standards beyond
403 sound veterinary science and best management practices in regard to raising, marketing,
404 handling, feeding, housing, or transporting of livestock and poultry. '23

Antibiotic Feed Additives

406 Antibiotic feed additives found safe and effective by the Food and Drug Administration
407 should not be restricted. '18

408 We support continued research to provide a definitive answer to the question of the use
409 of antibiotics in agribusiness and to the health of the public. '18

410 We oppose mandatory reporting of on-farm antibiotic usage data. '18

Livestock and Poultry

412 Government officials and inspectors must be required to always follow stringent
413 biosecurity practices and respect private property rights when visiting farms. '17

414 We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. '17

415 We urge MDA to work with USDA to review and clarify the tagging process under the
416 Premise ID program for all livestock producers. '17

417 We strongly oppose any ban of the use of cages in layer operations. '23

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ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES

We recommend the Maryland Department of Agriculture update, remodel and maintain regional animal health laboratories. '08

We urge Maryland Department of Agriculture to fund and fill the un-staffed positions without delay. '10

A strong animal health program needs to be supported by the state. We support full accreditation of Maryland's Animal Health Labs at Salisbury and Frederick. With biosecurity and agri-terrorism concerns and to support the well-being of Maryland's livestock industries, it is crucial that the laboratory services are upgraded for rapid and accurate disease diagnosis. '09

AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture is a branch of agriculture, and all applicable regulations shall be a function of MDA. DNR, as a regulatory agency, shall be removed from control of all aquaculture products and production regardless of location. All current DNR laws and regulations affecting aquaculture shall be referred to MDA for modification and implementation as agricultural laws and regulations. Restrictions and policies implemented by DNR relating to the management of wild aquatic resources shall not infringe in any manner on aquaculture activities. '20

We support the Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council's recommendations that provide science-based guidance on how aquaculture should be managed '20

We support legislation that will strengthen laws related to theft of oysters from aquaculture operations, including enforcement of oyster theft under criminal property larceny charges. We also support amending the elements of the current criminal charge law to allow proof of cut buoys versus those frayed by natural causes. We recommend changes to the Natural Resources Article to include language to enforce Maryland's criminal property larceny law against not only oyster aquaculture thieves who knowingly steal from aquaculture leases, but also those who knowingly possess illegally harvested oysters. '22

AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD

We recognize that Blue Crabs in the Chesapeake Bay are a highly valuable resource for both commercial and recreational activities. Regulations controlling this fishery should be managed through modern data collection and sound science, with input from all stakeholders as well as the Bi-State Blue Crab Technical Committee and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. '06

BEEKEEPING

We support increased funding for the MDA Apiary Inspection Department (within Plant Protection and Weed Management) for both personnel hours and equipment necessary to perform inspections. '22

We support fully funding The Honeybee Lab at the University of Maryland, which conducts critical scientific research and outreach programs throughout the state as well as providing extension services to Maryland beekeepers through its Bee Squad. '22

We oppose laws or regulations that prevent or discourage the keeping of honeybees and other pollinators in Maryland, including county zoning ordinances. '22

We support the planting of pollinator habitat by county and state agencies on roadsides, rights of way, and similar areas in place of grasses, if the habitat is not a noxious or invasive species of plants. '22

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BROWNFIELDS

We encourage the use of Brownfields as a means of solar generation in lieu of the use of prime and productive farmland. '22
We encourage the repurpose of Brownfields within planned urban developments and city limits to be used for urban agriculture. '22

CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS

Farmers and Ranchers should be protected from harmful actions, exempted from liability, and be eligible to receive financial relief if Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), chemical contaminants or other harmful substances are found on a farm or ranch caused by application as a passive receiver without disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23
We recommend further testing for other possible PFAS and chemical contamination sources in ground water. '23
No PFAS or chemical contaminant regulations should be promulgated at either the state or federal level without conclusive scientific data. '23
We oppose landowners, producers, or their lenders being held liable for the cost of chemical contaminant remediation, caused by application as a passive receiver without disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23
We support funding for remediation or retirement of agricultural fields or animals if required by the state due to PFAS or other chemical contamination, caused by application as a passive receiver without disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23

CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

We oppose regulations that put farmers who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed at a competitive disadvantage. States within the Bay Watershed should act as a cohesive unit when implementing regulations or practices to avoid creating a competitive disadvantage to one or more states. '13
We fully support federal programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program at USDA that reward and encourage farmers to install conservation practices. '09
We recommend that industry, urban run-off, wastewater treatment plants, etc. be given the same time limit as agriculture to reduce the impact of nutrient loading on the Chesapeake Bay. Emphasis should be placed on municipal, urban, and industrial areas regarding water quality, nutrient management, and solid waste disposal. '10
We urge the state to remove the sediment and nutrients trapped behind the Conowingo Dam as a priority in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. '13
All non-compliant discharges and spills from wastewater treatment plants should be reported immediately and be made readily available to the public. This information should be posted in a cumulative manner and should be on a per watershed basis. '11
The entire Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries should be considered a no discharge zone in reference to marine vessels. '15
We recognize the Chesapeake Bay as a valuable natural resource. We support efforts to restore the health of the Bay and we encourage farmers to utilize Best Management Practices in their agricultural operations. '07
We urge continued and increased funding for research and implementation of BMPs on farms, including nutrient management plans and the construction of ponds, waterways, and buffer strips to reduce run-off and ground water contamination. '12

512 We recommend that cost share programs be evaluated and revised as necessary to
513 ensure equity for participants. '07

514 We urge the UMD, MDA and MDE to jointly develop and utilize thorough, accurate and
515 current information for describing the condition of the natural resource base in Maryland and
516 the contribution of the agricultural industry in protecting and enhancing that base. '09

517 We recommend that greater attention and research be given to what is happening in
518 the water column of the Bay itself. The filter feeders and small aquatic life will have to be a
519 part of the long-term solution for the Bay cleanup. Harvesting moratoriums, restrictions on
520 harvesting methods, and other measures should be considered. '16

521 State funding should be dramatically increased for revival of oysters, targeting surface
522 raised oysters and other filter feeders. '14

523 We support the allowance of tax credits to be sold through a broker system based on
524 the current income tax subtraction modification for the purchasing of conservation equipment
525 '15

526 **Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up**

527 We support a dedicated fund for conservation programs that financially assists farmers
528 and other non-point source contributors who implement practices to improve the water quality
529 of the Chesapeake Bay. '07

530 All dedicated funds for Chesapeake Bay clean-up should be restricted solely to improve
531 the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. '10

532 We support maintaining the cover crop portion of the Bay Restoration Fund at no less
533 than 40% of all funds collected from septic users. '11

534 **Storm water Management Regulations and Fees**

535 We believe the storm water management fee (rain tax) that has been assessed in many
536 counties is too high on farmland. Farmers are already taking steps to address the agricultural
537 goals in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup plan (TMDL WIP). Farmers are spending money to install
538 Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent soil erosion, run off and nutrient movement.
539 Farmers should not also have to pay to address urban storm water control measures. '13

540 We also oppose the expansion to other counties of the existing storm water utility
541 fees. '13

542 Agricultural structures and supporting grounds should not be held to the same storm
543 water management standards as commercial buildings. '11

544 The construction of all new agricultural structures should be exempt from having a
545 storm water management plan. '12

546 **TMDL & Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)**

547 Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and the Total Maximum Daily Load
548 (TMDL) for the Bay and its tributaries will place an unfair economic disadvantage on farms in
549 the Bay watershed as compared to farms elsewhere. As the percentage of nutrient load from
550 urban areas continues to increase, it would be inequitable for agriculture to be burdened with
551 excessive offsets and trading. We ask that cost vs. benefit be carefully considered in all debate
552 on environmental policies. No programs should be implemented without a financial impact
553 study being done. Government should direct actions that are the best that can be achieved
554 within reasonable limits to reduce impacts to the Bay. '19

555 We urge funding for all cost-share programs for farmers to implement the TMDL and
556 funding for staff and technical support for the UMD Extension and the Soil Conservation
557 Districts. '10

558 As the TMDL WIP is implemented, private property rights should be protected. State
559 and local governments should be precluded from attaining goals by mandating agricultural land
560 retirement using eminent domain or regulation. '13

561 If the implementation of environmental regulations results in the removal of
562 agricultural land from production or the installation of conservation practices, then the farmer
563 should be compensated for the land and maintenance of the practices. '18

564 We support new dedicated federal funding for the Conowingo Watershed
565 Implementation Plan (WIP). '21

566

567 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

568 We oppose bans on common agricultural production practices. '23

569 **Farmers' Markets**

570 We strongly encourage the continuance of all farmers' markets. '21

571 We support legislation that will promote farmers' markets by creating a central registry
572 of Maryland farmers' markets, to include roadside stands, agricultural product sales locations,
573 or other locations that advertise, promote, or use the term "farmers' market." '21

574 We encourage legislation that will limit legal liability to registered farmers' market
575 operators. '21

576 We oppose the use of title "Farmers' Market" for a store that is not truly a Farmers'
577 Market. We urge Maryland to adopt a law like the one invoked in Maine to define how and
578 when the term Farmers' Market may be used. '21

579 **Labeling Requirements**

580 We strongly support truth in labeling of food and food products. '21

581 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

582 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise.
583 We urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's
584 efforts to improve marketing services. We support the "Maryland's Best" marketing program.
585 '21

586 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that
587 serve all citizens. '21

588 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Commerce to continue its policy of
589 providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural industries. '21

590 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of
591 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities, including grain for export. '23

592 We support state grants and financial support for local co-ops, grain facilities,
593 marketing, and food processing facilities. '22

594 **Deep Water Terminal**

595 We support a viable grain export terminal. '21

596 The State of Maryland must work diligently to develop a competitive grain trade deep
597 water terminal, which is critical for the survival of grain producers. '21

598 **Roadside Markets**

599 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural
600 products. '21

601 We encourage the enforcement of existing county zoning laws related to farmers'
602 markets and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer
603 merchants and/or non-local merchants. '21

604 **Roadside Signs**

605 Due to the need for the farmers to diversify their operations the use of roadside signs is
606 imperative to let the public know your location and which products are available. Therefore,
607 we support exempting such signs from the regulations governing roadside signs. '21

608 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

609 We oppose any segment of the farm community promoting their production methods as
610 healthier or better for the environment without evidence to support those claims. '21

611 **Value Added**

612 We support the development of a statewide value-added processing system. '21

613

614 **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

615 **Best Management Practices**

616 The process of obtaining a permit from the appropriate government agencies to do any
617 type of work in or along the small streams that flow through our farmland has become
618 extremely burdensome and time consuming. We urge these government agencies to approve
619 general permits to install approved best management practices. '17

620 We encourage agricultural landowners and tenant operators to study, develop and
621 implement long-term programs or lease arrangements with conservation practice systems,
622 including nutrient management plans that will achieve the desired water quality benefits. '17

623 Interpretation and definition of Best Management Practices (BMPs) must recognize the
624 economic impact and cost to the farmer. '17

625 If accepted best management practices are implemented in good faith and later
626 determined to have a negative impact on the environment or natural resources, the landowner
627 should not be held legally or financially responsible. '17

628 Farmers and landowners shall be allowed to install culverts in non-blue line ditches to
629 increase the accessibility of their land. '17

630 **Conservation Practices**

631 We support the reclassification of Class 3 trout streams, which contain no native trout
632 to Class 4 streams. '17

633 Any contract poultry grower in Maryland, regardless of capacity, should be eligible for
634 cost share funds for both manure sheds and composters. '17

635 We support landowner wildlife plantings but encourage the restriction of tree and shrub
636 plantings within 25 feet of any right-of-way to reduce the cost of trimming at taxpayer expense
637 and to enhance public safety. '17

638 We strongly oppose any effort to classify conservation enhancements on private land as
639 public domain for recreation or hunting purposes. '17

640 We urge the state to assure that adequate funds be available to provide sufficient cost
641 sharing of approved soil conservation practices. We also urge the state to provide an adequate
642 number of trained personnel in local Soil Conservation District to assist farmers and property
643 owners in the development and implementation of their conservation plans, making sure the
644 plans not only provide the needed environmental protection but are practical and economical
645 as well. '17

646 We oppose any effort to replace technical expertise within the Natural Resources
647 Conservation Service or Soil Conservation Districts with non-governmental organization (NGO)
648 personnel. '18

649 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

650 We strongly recommend that public agencies should not be eligible for funding under
651 the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). '17

652 We believe that programs that offer incentives for conservation, wildlife habitat
653 creation and preservation should minimize the loss of prime farmland while maintaining our
654 natural resources. '17

655 We propose changes to the CREP that are intended to keep prime land available for
656 production, reduce the economic incentive to take whole farms or major portions thereof out
657 of production, to remove the government as a primary cash rent competitor for valuable
658 agricultural land and to provide for more effective maintenance of land under CREP contract.
659 '17

660 Our proposed changes include the following:

- 661 (1) CREP contracts should be issued only on land that has a scientifically supported impact
662 on water quality. CREP should not be used to create wildlife habitat where water quality
663 benefit is negligible. '17
- 664 (2) Buffers should be variable, with a maximum width of 100 feet, based on topographical
665 and soil conditions to ensure water quality benefits and minimize loss of productive
666 cropland. '17
- 667 (3) Buffers established adjacent to ditches should have a maximum width of 50 feet and
668 should be smaller if prime and productive soils are impacted. Buffers should not include
669 trees within 35 feet of a ditch to facilitate maintenance of the ditch. The practice of
670 digging ditches just to enroll the entire acreage on farms should be prohibited. '17
- 671 (4) Regulations should be developed to require weed control on all land subject to a CREP
672 contract. The maintenance and control rules should be enforced. '17
- 673 (5) Mowing of CREP lands should be required annually if weeds cannot be controlled by
674 other means. Weeds of primary concern to adjacent farmers include, but are not limited
675 to giant ragweed, multiflora rose, burr cucumber, phragmites, autumn olive, mile-a-
676 minute, and kudzu, scrub trees and noxious grasses. '17
- 677 (6) Rental rates for future CREP contracts should be adjusted to provide for a sliding-scale
678 that pays more for land immediately adjacent to water and less for land closer to prime
679 and productive soils. Rates should be in line with local rental rates. '17

680 We urge federal, state, and local agencies to conduct field inspections on CREP contracts
681 that include noxious weed compliance. If landowners are not in compliance with the contract,
682 agencies should work with landowners to gain compliance. '17

683 USDA landlord/tenant rules should be strictly enforced to prevent losses to farmers who
684 have already invested resources into land being considered for a CREP contract. '17

685 Upon re-enrollment of land under a CREP contract, a farm should not be required to
686 destroy existing vegetation and replant if the existing CREP land has been properly maintained
687 and will meet the water quality and erosion control goals of the program. '17

688

689

COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

690 **Cover Crop Program**

691 The cover crop program administered by MDA should remain a voluntary cost-share
692 program and should be amended as follows:

- 693 (1) It should be made permanent. '07
- 694 (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs '10
- 695 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '17

696 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is
697 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
698 (5) Farmers should receive the same cover crop payment for manure incorporated land that
699 they would be paid for no till land, due to new manure incorporation requirements. '13
700 (6) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain
701 crops and hay acreage. '07
702 (7) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
703 (8) It should allow flexible planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '13
704 (9) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast
705 seeding. '07
706 (10) Aerial seeding should be funded as all other methods of seeding and should not exclude
707 double crop acres. '14
708 (11) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it
709 on the farm. '18
710 (12) The annual signup date for the program should be from June 1st through September 1st.
711 '12
712 (13) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested,
713 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09
714 (14) Fields should be allowed to contain blends of different cover crops if a nitrogen scavenger
715 crop is included in the blends. This should include the addition of legumes to such blends. '12
716 (15) Change seeding rates mandated for the cereal species that currently exist to be in
717 accordance with current University of Maryland Extension research findings. '12
718 (16) Give the option to adjust seeding rates and planting methods to facilitate late season
719 termination, green planting, intercropping, or relay cropping as an alternative to cover crop
720 burndown. '16
721 (17) Seeding rate should be calculated using germination rate and size of seed to achieve a
722 number of viable seeds per acre. '17
723 (18) Add sorghum to the eligible standing crops that the \$10 bonus aerial application for cover
724 crop can be seeded into. '19
725 (19) Recommend that MDA issue the first cover crop split payment before December 15th and
726 any final payments within 15 days after the crop termination report has been submitted. '19
727 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program.
728 '10
729 Maryland farmers and/or Ag organizations should have input on cover crop program
730 and rate changes before those changes are implemented. '14
731 **Cost Share Programs**
732 Cost share programs need to expand to include small animal unit operations. '14
733 We recommend the flat rates and components of a practice be reviewed and revised
734 annually with agricultural input to reflect current cost. '14
735 Maryland farmers/agricultural organizations should have input into state cost share
736 program changes before those changes are implemented. '14
737 We recommend that NRCS, Soil Conservation District and Maryland Department of
738 Agriculture resources be increased, and/or the approval process be streamlined to reduce a
739 backlog of cost share applications. '16
740 We recommend that the State fund the MACS program with General Obligation Bonds.
741 '17

742 We urge MDA's Maryland Ag Cost Share (MACS) program establish a higher cost-share
743 rate for Young and Beginning Farmers. '20
744 The State should continue to fund the Manure Transport cost-share program. '20
745 We urge the MDA conservation grants and the USDA conservation contract programs to
746 reevaluate contract terms if the cost of labor and materials increase over 5% before completion
747 of the contract. '21
748 We encourage development of a cost share program for producers to construct or
749 install a methane digester for any livestock waste. '23
750

CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

752 We recommend that the membership of the Critical Areas Commission be comprised of
753 at least 50% farmers who own property within 1,000 feet of the critical area. '21
754 Due to the impact on the agricultural community, we urge county governments to work
755 with their county Farm Bureaus when they develop their local programs. '21
756 We are opposed to the inclusion of upstream tributaries and non-tidal water into the
757 Critical Areas Program. '21
758 We support legislation that would require the state to compensate, at the fair market
759 value, Maryland property owners who are monetarily affected by the Critical Area Legislation
760 and/or the Endangered Species Act. '21
761 The inability to harvest timber in the critical areas is creating an inequitable financial
762 loss for the landowner. We recommend that the landowner be compensated for this loss. '21
763 We are concerned about exemptions granted within the Critical Area for marinas and
764 other recreational water related activities. '21
765

CROP PROTECTION

767 We urge keeping all federally labeled crop protection products legal in the state,
768 counties, and municipalities. '19
769 We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them
770 by approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '19
771 To help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to maintain a
772 biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old chemicals, chemical
773 containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '19
774 We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned
775 chemicals. '19
776 Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water
777 contaminated by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to
778 label instructions. '19
779 Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not
780 on emotional issues. '19
781 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The
782 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an
783 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to
784 farm his property. '19
785 We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to
786 aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '19
787 We oppose the collection and distribution of pesticide use data beyond that collected in
788 the USDA NASS survey. '19

789 We oppose the establishment of a pesticide use data reporting system that would make
790 information available to the public or to “interested” researchers. ’19

791 We urge the Maryland State Chemist to approve special exemption labels for crop
792 protectants when they are approved by adjacent states. ’23

793 **Disease Prevention & Pest Control**

794 We support the monitoring of plant diseases such as Asian Soybean Rust in the exotic
795 plants used by homeowners and landscapers that may include invasive weed species that serve
796 as alternate hosts. We urge MDA to study these plant species and bolster its efforts to assure
797 that all new plants have no negative impact on farm crops or nursery stock. ’19

798 We support existing restrictions on the movement of Ash trees to prevent the spread of
799 the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. ’19

800 We support funding for joint research by universities to study and eliminate the Brown
801 Marmorated Stink Bug and the Spotted Lanternfly. ’20

802 **Environmental Surcharge**

803 We are opposed to any state tax or surcharge on fertilizers and crop protectants to fund
804 environmental programs. ’19

805 **Pesticide Stewardship**

806 We support participating in a Pesticide Stewardship Education program with MDA,
807 Extension and other commodity groups for educational outreach geared towards consumers.
808 ’19

809

810 **CYBER SECURITY FOR THE FOOD CHAIN**

811 We support research and implementation of cyber-Ag. security programs to protect
812 local and state supply chains. ’21

813

814 **DAIRY INDUSTRY**

815 We strongly support the combined efforts of Maryland Farm Bureau with the MD Dairy
816 Industry Association and the Dairy Industry Advisory Council to develop a program that will
817 enhance the transparency of the pricing of milk to producers, raise milk prices, and increase the
818 stability and viability of the dairy industry in Maryland. ’17

819 We urge the state to fund the Maryland Dairy Farmer Emergency Trust fund with a
820 minimum of \$5 million per year. ’17

821 We support the Maryland Dairy Industry Association and urge farmers to join. ’17

822 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to staff at least one full-time dairy
823 specialist. ’17

824 **Milk Marketing**

825 Maintaining consumer confidence in dairy products is critical to the viability of the dairy
826 industry. Dairy product labeling should be truthful, accurate and be able to be substantiated.
827 ’17

828 Milk is a liquid produced by the mammary glands of mammals, and only products
829 meeting this definition should be permitted to be labeled, advertised and sold in Maryland as
830 milk ’17

831 All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as “raw milk” only. ’17

832 We believe schools should not provide milk to students after the sell-by date. ’17

833 We support placing milk vending machines in all schools. ’17

834 We urge Maryland Public Schools to remove skim milk for the food options and replace
835 with no less than 2% milk. ’18

836 We urge Maryland Public Schools to add a minimum of 1% flavored milk to the food
837 options. '18

838 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

839 We oppose new or increased fees for dairy farmers, haulers, and cooperatives. '17

840 We support current Maryland Law for the prohibition of raw milk sales. We support
841 legislation that would prohibit the use of cattle-share or farm-share agreements to circumvent
842 existing raw milk sales laws. '17

843 We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Health and legislators amend COMAR to
844 reflect the current Pasteurized Milk Ordinance to allow a 72-hour milk pickup window. '22

845

846 **DREDGE SPOIL**

847 We support the dredging of Baltimore Harbor, which would improve ship traffic and
848 benefit the state's economy. '07

849 When deposit sites are needed, dredge spoil shall be used to replenish low areas that
850 were once highland that are now wet or have eroded away. '05

851 We oppose dumping of dredge spoils into open water. '14

852 We oppose dumping of dredge spoil from behind the Conowingo Dam on prime and
853 productive farmland. '20

854

855 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

856 We support a voluntary conservation habitat reserve program that would provide
857 incentives for landowners to establish and maintain habitat for endangered species. '22

858 Compensation shall be provided for landowners where use of the land is restricted by
859 the Endangered Species Act. '22

860 We urge the state to eliminate from the list those species (threatened or endangered)
861 that might have limited numbers in Maryland but are common elsewhere. '22

862 Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal
863 law. '22

864 Any plant or animal that is taken because of an agricultural practice shall be considered
865 an incidental taking. '22

866

867 **ENERGY POLICY**

868 We strongly support a comprehensive, long-term energy policy that fully utilizes
869 domestic energy resources and aggressively promotes the access, availability, and affordability
870 for agriculture. '22

871 We support an increase in off-shore and land-based drilling for oil and natural gas to
872 enhance supplies, lower prices and reduce dependence on foreign sources. '19

873 We strongly support the development of shale gas in Maryland. '19

874 We urge that farm rates and demand charges be comparable across electric providers.
875 '19

876 We oppose the banning of small gas engines. '21

877 **Ethanol & Biodiesel Fuel**

878 We support an energy independence and efficiency policy to include: (1) site approval,
879 environmental issues, funding, and approval of renewable energy sources; (2) the use of
880 renewable fuels in county, state, and federal automobile fleets; (3) support for the construction
881 of ethanol and biofuels plants in Maryland; and (4) support for production and use incentives
882 for ethanol and biodiesel. '19

883 We urge the use of some ethanol in gasoline and biodiesel and renewable_diesel in
884 diesel fuel. '22

885 We urge new research to improve ethanol, biodiesel, and renewable diesel
886 compatibility with medium and heavy-duty vehicles as well as farm equipment to meet new
887 engine standards. '22

888 We urge that all state and county government vehicles (including school buses) use
889 biodiesel and renewable diesel or ethanol fuels. '22

890 We support the use of renewable fuels as an alternative to electric medium and heavy-
891 duty vehicles. '22

892 We encourage the maritime industries to use bio-diesel fuel on the Chesapeake Bay and
893 in other Maryland waterways. '19

894 We strongly believe that public officials need to seriously consider the opportunities and
895 potential for increasing local or domestic demand of commodities through the production of
896 Ethanol E-85. '19

897 We recommend that the Maryland Department of Transportation make changes to
898 guidelines so that current E85 (85% blend gasoline/ethanol) models may be used in fleets to
899 meet alternative fuel mandates. '19

900 We urge the support of government agencies such as the Department of Commerce in
901 the development of biofuels in Maryland. '21

902 **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

903 We encourage research, development, and utilization of alternative energy sources
904 from methane, biomass, wind, nuclear, solar, hydrogen, hydro, and clean natural gas. '19

905 Additionally, we urge that this process be aided by appropriate government tax
906 incentives. '19

907 We support energy generation from all agricultural residues and biproducts to be
908 considered value-added production on a farm. '20

909 We support initiatives to generate heat & electricity from timber resources. '19

910 We support the use of on-farm wind and solar energy production to provide electric
911 energy for the farm and to be sold to the energy grid. We encourage state and county
912 governments to provide regulatory support and encouragement for wind generators and
913 turbines to help offset farm energy costs. '19

914 We oppose commercial and community solar energy facilities being considered as an
915 agricultural activity. '22

916 We oppose the use of "farm" when referring to an alternative energy generation facility.
917 '19

918 We oppose the State of Maryland preemption of local and county land use policy for
919 renewable energy generation projects. '19

920 We support removing large scale commercial solar energy generating facilities from the
921 RPS carve-out for solar energy. '19

922 We support further research of the economic merit of Agrivoltaics and the impacts of
923 increased solar to the energy grid. '23

924 We oppose community or commercial solar energy facilities being built on class 1 and 2
925 agricultural soils. '22

926 We encourage that publicly owned lands, brownfields, rooftops, parking lots and urban
927 areas be utilized to assist with the clean energy mandate in lieu of farmland. '22

928 Commercial energy facilities should have appropriate riparian buffer and setback
929 requirements. '19

930 **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

931 Outdoor wood fired boilers/furnaces that utilize approved emission control systems and
932 EPA best burn practices for Hydronic heaters should be allowed. '19

933 **Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS)**

934 We support an additional carve-out in the Maryland RPS for poultry litter and livestock
935 manure to energy generation. '19

936 We oppose any % increase to the RPS if it causes an increase to the electric rates of the
937 consumer. '19

938 We oppose any additional increases to the solar carve out in the RPS unless projects are
939 two megawatts or smaller. '19

940

941 **ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING**

942 We urge changes to "standing law" so that no farmer who is in compliance with
943 applicable law could be sued by a third party. '12

944

945 **EQUINE INDUSTRY**

946 We support the inclusion of inventories of the various classes of equine in the state in
947 future MDA and NASS agriculture statistical surveys. '18

948 We support the recognition of equine as part of the agricultural industry and not as
949 companion animals. Riding lessons, boarding, or training given on a farm, and pleasure horses
950 should be considered a part of the normal agriculture practices. We support measures to
951 improve the Maryland Bred Program within the Thoroughbred and Standardbred Industry. '18

952 We support the creation of state debt to fund the Maryland Horse Park.

953 We support the creation of incentives to horse owners to work with the Ag agencies
954 that offer technical assistance for implementing conservation and best management practices.
955 '18

956

957 **FAMILY VALUES**

958 We recommend that the Maryland legislature and the Governor should: (1) Pass
959 legislation to make parents fully accountable for the destructive action of their children under
960 the age of 18; and (2) Have the party involved fully monetarily liable for the destructive action
961 they cause. If they are financially unable to pay, they should do so through community service.
962 The monetary amount should be determined and paid in full. '15

963

964 **FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES**

965 We recommend that the State FSA Administration grant more power to the county
966 committees to adequately staff county offices. '07

967 We recommend more farmer input on FSA office closures before any implementation
968 occurs. '05

969 We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and
970 consolidation of offices and services. '14

971

972 **FOREST CONSERVATION**

973 We oppose any new publicly funded afforestation projects in Maryland that does not
974 include a plan for the following: wildlife control, noxious weed control, and forest management.
975 '21

976 We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with
977 regards to the harvesting of trees. '21

978 Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural
979 lands under the state of Maryland's conservation or land use programs. '21

980

981 **GAMBLING**

982 We support that a portion of gaming proceeds continue to be utilized to supplement the
983 purse and bred fund accounts. We support licensed video gaming and gambling at racetracks
984 and/or other facilities and that a minimum of 25% of the total net revenue from these sources
985 be used to supplement the purse and Maryland Bred Fund accounts to equal the average dollar
986 value of the three highest states in the Purse and Breeding bonus accounts. Any expansion into
987 other forms of gambling such as table games and sports book like Video Lottery Terminals
988 (VLTs) should benefit the equine industry and agricultural education programs. '15

989 We urge the state legislature to designate a portion of the education funds generated
990 from the VLT's to Ag Education programs and be administered by MAEF. '15

991

992

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

993 We support the production and use of GMO products. We encourage the education of
994 government officials and the public on the product safety, economic benefits, and
995 environmental benefits of GMOs. '07

996 We oppose legislation that would restrict the use of GMO commodities grown in the
997 state. '12

998 We support GMO policy decisions only at the federal government level and not at the
999 state government level '15

1000 We oppose state mandated labeling of products made with GMO crops. '15

1001

1002

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS – STATE GOVERNMENT

Elected Officials

1004 We support a constitutional change to elect one senator per county. '19

1005 We support a House of Delegates apportioned on population with a minimum of one
1006 delegate per county. '19

1007 We oppose any method of selection for Clerks of the Court, Register of Wills, and Judges
1008 of the Orphans Court, other than election by the people. '19

1009 We urge local control in the selections of those responsible for operating our local court
1010 systems. '19

Ethics

1012 We support a change in current State law to allow farmers to become eligible for
1013 employment by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '19

Government Spending

1015 We support programs and funding intended to ensure the most vulnerable among us
1016 have access to healthy, affordable, and local food. '22

1017 We urge the reduction of government agency bureaucracy and duplication to reduce
1018 costs, fees and frustration of the general public. '19

1019 We urge all levels of government to operate within a balanced budget. '19

1020 We oppose any state food policy that limits, impairs, restricts, or bans the purchase of
1021 agricultural commodities produced in Maryland by State or Local agencies and institutions. '19

1022 We encourage State and Local agencies and institutions to purchase all types of
1023 Maryland agricultural commodities and products. '19

1024 We support a state emergency relief fund to be administered directly to livestock and
1025 poultry growers, including contract growers, in the event of an animal disease outbreak
1026 resulting in production setbacks. '22

1027 **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

1028 We strongly oppose consolidation or transfer of any of MDA's current programs,
1029 functions, or authorities to any other department. We strongly support the transfer of all ag-
1030 related programs, functions, and authorities from other departments to MDA. '19

1031 We urge the MDA to establish official standardized office hours for all department
1032 offices including field offices. '19

1033 **Regulatory Reform**

1034 We strongly recommend that any new policy or regulation proposed affecting land
1035 management, nutrient management, environmental programs, or enforcement be required to
1036 include an economic impact study to evaluate the effect on vested persons. This shall be
1037 performed as part of the developmental process for each regulation and policy. '19

1038 We strongly recommend that the farm community continue to be consulted and be
1039 allowed to participate in the formulation of regulations and laws at all levels of government
1040 particularly when they adversely impact the Ag community. '19

1041 Agencies developing regulations should seek additional input from agricultural
1042 stakeholders. '19

1043 We strongly recommend all government agencies develop regulations in cooperation
1044 with other agencies so that there is a reduction in duplication and a consistency of purpose. '19

1045 We ask for removal of the question on Maryland's death certificate in bold print, "Did
1046 tobacco use contribute to the cause of death, YES { } NO { } UNCERTAIN { }?" '19

1047 Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said
1048 regulations. '19

1049 We strongly recommend that all State agencies review their rules and regulations that
1050 affect the agriculture industry and modify and/or eliminate those that are outdated or serve no
1051 purpose. '19

1052 Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and
1053 scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry
1054 industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All
1055 regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis. '19

1056 The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR)
1057 Committee should have the authority to prevent a proposed regulation from being
1058 implemented. The Committee should be able to refer controversial proposals to the full
1059 General Assembly for a vote or for amendment before an agency can implement the proposed
1060 regulation. '19

1061 We discourage passage of any law or regulation concerning Maryland agriculture
1062 products or processes, which would not apply to products or processes from other states or
1063 countries. Thereby not putting Maryland farmers at a competitive disadvantage. '23

1064 **State and Local Agencies**

1065 We support mental health programs and services to the Agricultural Community that
1066 provide education and information on where to obtain mental health services. '19

1067 We support the co-location of Ag agencies, Ag education and resources in regional Ag
1068 centers when feasible. '19

1069 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '19
1070 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
1071 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the
1072 Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict
1073 the access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on
1074 private property to no greater than law enforcement agencies. '19

1075 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
1076 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
1077 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate
1078 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
1079 practices. '19

1080 **State-Owned Farmland**

1081 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
1082 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
1083 converted to conservation uses. '19

1084 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

1085 Considering the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension
1086 program to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the
1087 present state pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '19
1088

1089 **GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

1090 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We
1091 recognize the value of urban greenways but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural
1092 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with
1093 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or
1094 rails to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that
1095 adjoins the proposed greenway before a study commences.'07

1096 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any
1097 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the
1098 opportunity for input. Also, the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail
1099 use on the safety, health, security, privacy, and economic interests of the adjacent landowners
1100 and determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail
1101 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,
1102 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use
1103 of the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for
1104 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers.'10
1105

1106 **GYPSY MOTH CONTROL**

1107 We recommend that the state gypsy moth control program be maintained at a 250 egg
1108 masses per acre baseline. '18
1109

1110 **INSURANCE**

1111 **Crop Insurance**

1112 We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a
1113 tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. '07

1114 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

1115 Health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-
1116 employed individuals. '13

1117 We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated
1118 health insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits to better manage health
1119 insurance costs. '05

1120 We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge
1121 the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of
1122 quality health care. '13

1123 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent
1124 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.'06

1125 We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits
1126 to long-term care insurance. '10

1127 **Insurance Rates**

1128 We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates
1129 throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on
1130 experience ratings. '05

1131 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry because
1132 of claims that are considered "Act of God" incidents. '16

1133 We strongly oppose the increase of unemployment insurance rates to pay for the
1134 unemployment due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We support repaying the unemployment
1135 insurance trust fund with federal COVID funding. '21

1136

1137 **JOHNE'S DISEASE**

1138 We acknowledge that progress has been made with the Johne's Disease program and
1139 request that the Maryland Department of Agriculture provide continued support for it. '23

1140

1141 **LABOR STANDARDS**

1142 We oppose overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. '14

1143 We support maximum opportunities for youth to work on farms. We believe youth gain
1144 important life skills, learn safety around animals and equipment, benefit from involvement in
1145 programs like 4-H and FFA, become interested in careers in agriculture, better understand that
1146 farmers are professionals and use best management practices, and establish a strong work
1147 ethic. Therefore, we urge government not to limit these opportunities. '12

1148 We support the passage of legislation to exempt agriculture workers and point of sale
1149 workers in agriculture from minimum wage increase requirements. '20

1150

1151 **LAND STEWARDSHIP**

1152 Realizing that stewardship of the earth is in the public interest, we support the
1153 recognition of agriculture as a proper and environmentally sound use of our land resources. '06

1154

1155 **LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING**

1156 **Annexation**

1157 Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations
1158 within the county. '22

1159 **Growth Management**

1160 We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations
1161 within our state. '22

1162 We oppose any state policy that overrides county planning and zoning authority. '22

1163 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.
1164 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural
1165 counties. '22

1166 Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's
1167 property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '22

1168 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).
1169 '22

1170 **Foreign Investment**

1171 Foreign investment in Maryland assets is a concern. The impact of foreign investment in
1172 agriculture, banking, insurance, and other business institutions in the United States should be
1173 monitored. '23

1174 Foreign government ownership of utility companies and natural resource businesses,
1175 including agricultural land, should be limited to less than a controlling interest. We oppose
1176 preferential treatment of foreign investments in agriculture and insist that foreign investors be
1177 required to conform to the same tax laws, import and export regulations as American
1178 producers. '23

1179 **Permitting**

1180 We support the exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building permits,
1181 storm water management regulation, and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the
1182 zoning code. We further support the inclusion of specific language in the building code to
1183 permit public access to existing, structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated
1184 upgrades to the full current codes. '22

1185 **Zoning**

1186 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their
1187 efforts to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners
1188 involved should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria
1189 changes. Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall
1190 provide for just compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no downzoning on
1191 agriculture land. '22

1192 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '22

1193 Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or
1194 default. '22

1195

1196

LAW ENFORCEMENT

1197 **Penalties & Confinement**

1198 We urge the state to increase penalties for defacing and removal of "Mason-Dixon Line"
1199 markers. '05

1200 We favor adequate prison facilities so that inmates can serve their sentences. We
1201 recommend that inmates in minimum security penal complexes be required to work on
1202 highways, prison farms or other public projects to help defray the cost of their food and
1203 support and to pay restitution to their victims. We also favor emphasis on the rehabilitation of
1204 persons confined to penal institutions to afford them a better opportunity to assume a
1205 constructive role in society. '06

1206 We believe that the State of Maryland should enact legislation providing for a
1207 mandatory life sentence without parole, or a death sentence, for violent murder offenses and
1208 murder offenses occurring during the illegal transportation and/or distribution of controlled
1209 dangerous substances (drugs). '05

1210 We urge the Department of Corrections to return prisoners to their county of origin
1211 after the completion of their sentence before their release.'07

1212 We support legislation that would prevent elected officials from holding office if
1213 convicted of a crime or of misconduct in office and from receiving pensions or benefits
1214 pertaining to the office that they held.'06

1215 **Judicial Process**

1216 We recommend that the defendants be brought to a speedy trial and if convicted, given
1217 a sentence sufficient to discourage further crimes. We support consistency in judicial
1218 sentencing for all.'07

1219 We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity
1220 defense of "innocent by reason of insanity" to "guilty, but insane." '05

1221 **Investigation of Crimes**

1222 We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between
1223 jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. '07

1224 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who
1225 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.'06

1226 To deter copper thefts, we propose a mandatory waiting period between the sale and
1227 the payment for certain salvaged material. '11

1228 We support increasing the penalties for, and the efforts to investigate and prosecute,
1229 agriculture and aquaculture related crimes including, but not limited to, dumping of residential
1230 and commercial trash and waste materials on private property. '21

1231 We support maintaining adequate police force funding to fully meet the
1232 needs of rural communities and agricultural producers. '20

1233

1234 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

1235 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law
1236 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

1237

1238 **LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS**

1239 The State of Maryland should institute policy whereby unsuccessful plaintiffs initiating
1240 litigation against farm and forest operations in Maryland shall be liable for the defendant's legal
1241 fees and appropriate damages if the defendant prevails in the course of the suit '23

1242 We oppose landowners, producers, or their lenders being held liable for the cost of
1243 chemical contaminants remediation, caused by application as a passive receiver without
1244 disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23

1245 **Contributory Negligence**

1246 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock
1247 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a
1248 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's
1249 responsible actions. '23

1250 **Agricultural Immunity**

1251 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '23

1252 We support immunity from liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers to afford
1253 the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '23

1254

1255 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

1256 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public
1257 monies.'06

1258

1259 **LOCAL/TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

1260 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08

1261 We support the State of Maryland increasing funding to the Tri-County Councils for the
1262 purpose of including and funding agricultural and natural resources development in their
1263 mission. '20

1264

1265 **MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

1266 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow hemp as an agricultural crop. '19

1267 We support increasing the legal THC content of industrial hemp to one percent. '22

1268

1269 **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

1270 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the
1271 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as
1272 necessary, including the purchase of needed equipment. '15

1273

1274 **NONTIDAL WETLANDS**

1275 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should
1276 be deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly
1277 compensated." '22

1278 We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that
1279 they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of
1280 public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost
1281 of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. '22

1282

1283 **NOXIOUS WEEDS**

1284 **Noxious Weed List**

1285 We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, Rosa
1286 multiflora (multi-flora rose) (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry),
1287 Microstegium vimineum (Japanese stilt grass), Amaranthus palmeri (Palmer Amaranth), Asiatic
1288 tearthumb (mile-a-minute vine or kudzu), Celastrus orbiculatus (Asiatic bittersweet vine) and
1289 Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven) placed on the noxious weed list. '22

1290 We urge the SHA to submit a realistic fiscal impact statement related to adding palmer
1291 amaranth to the noxious weed list. '18

1292 **Compliance on Government-Owned Land and Private Land Under Government Contract**

1293 We insist that local, county, state, federal governments, and public utilities control
1294 invasive species and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by
1295 them. '18

1296 We urge FSA and NRCS to educate private landowners about invasive species of weeds
1297 and control methods before and during the contract period. '18

1298 **Enforcement**

1299 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the
1300 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,
1301 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's
1302 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '18

1303 We recommend increasing the funding to provide proper enforcement of the noxious
1304 weed law and maintain a viable education, prevention, and treatment program. '18

1305 We recommend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators
1306 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are
1307 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1308 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1309 non-crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all the control methods outlined by the
1310 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '18

1311 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1312 conservation programs, so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1313 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '18

1314 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop procedures for adding
1315 new weeds to the noxious weed list. These procedures should include an estimate of the cost
1316 to control the weed. '18

1317 **Public Education**

1318 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1319 public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of noxious weeds. '18

1320 **Weed Control Methods**

1321 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1322 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and
1323 eliminate these noxious weeds. '18

1324 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious
1325 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will
1326 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination. '18

1327 We support the state providing cost share for control of noxious weeds and other weeds
1328 of concern. '18

1329 We support counties and the state to work with HOAs, Forest Conservation Easements
1330 and Storm Water Management Areas to control their noxious weeds and weeds of concern. '18

1331 **Weeds of Concern**

1332 We urge MDA in cooperation with University of Maryland Extension to create a weeds
1333 of concern program that identifies new or herbicide resistant weeds of concern, educates state
1334 agencies, landowners, and farmers on how to identify and manage these weeds, and
1335 encourages state agencies, landowners and farmers to implement best management practices
1336 to control these weeds. '18

1337

1338

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

1339 **Nutrient Management for Farms**

1340 We support nutrient management programs and that all farmers should apply nutrients
1341 in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound science. '21

1342 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of
1343 nutrient management plans. '09

1344 We support a nutrient management program that: (1) produces real water quality
1345 improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3) requires reasonable recordkeeping,
1346 (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5) provides adequate flexibility for
1347 farmers to properly manage their operations, (6) provides appropriate inspection and
1348 enforcement, and (7) provides appropriate incentives to offset operating and capital costs
1349 incurred by complying with the requirements of the program. '12

1350 We are opposed to the changes to the nutrient management regulations, which make
1351 MD agriculture less competitive by increasing the cost and difficulty of farming in Maryland
1352 without compensation. '13

1353 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.
1354 '10

1355 We recommend that MDA and the University of Maryland review and update the
1356 nitrogen use recommendations in UMD's Numan Pro software program, which is used for
1357 nutrient management plans. '18

1358 We recommend the composting of animals be an approved method of disposing of
1359 animal mortalities on the farm. '17

1360 We oppose expanding the Phosphorus Management Tool beyond the current
1361 implementation. '21

1362 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient
1363 management program to achieve the following:

- 1364 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- 1365 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.
1366 '05
- 1367 c. Prevent yield capping. '05
- 1368 d. We encourage the leveraging use of production methods and scientific nutrient
1369 recommendations from all US land-grant universities to make Maryland's Nutrient
1370 Management Planning more efficient '23
- 1371 e. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12
- 1372 f. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on
1373 an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14
- 1374 g. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and
1375 technologies. '18

1376 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a
1377 farm based on a complaint. '09

1378 We support the optional on-line reporting system for Annual Implementation Reports
1379 (AIRs) but oppose that being the only option. '21

1380 **Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality**

1381 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain
1382 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately written nutrient
1383 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government
1384 entity. '10

1385 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date, they should
1386 be properly destroyed. '08

1387 **Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education**

1388 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1389 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '13

1390 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**

1391 We support permanent funding for the University of Maryland Extension Nutrient
1392 Management Program in order to hire and maintain adequate, permanent nutrient
1393 management advisors to provide nutrient management education and plan development. '23
1394 *(Kent, As Amended)*

1395 All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '23

1396 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1397 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1398 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1399 We strongly oppose the Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised
1400 Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by MDE. '12

1401 We oppose public hearings for CAFO permit renewals that do not include facility
1402 expansion or modification. '16

1403 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1404 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1405 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '11

1406 We strongly oppose any fee structure for reviewing or inspecting MAFO or CAFO
1407 operation by MDE. '14

1408 We support transferring the MAFO permitting program from MDE to MDA while
1409 decoupling the NPDES permitting process from the MAFO permit. '17

1410 We oppose air quality monitoring as a requirement for MAFO/CAFO permits. '21

1411 **Manure and Litter Management**

1412 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for
1413 crop production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '20

1414 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.
1415 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies – beyond those previously conducted by
1416 UMD researchers – that include different soil types, locations, and manure types before any
1417 ban on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1418 Universities within the Bay Watershed should collaboratively research the benefits of
1419 organic nutrients vs. commercial fertilizer on leachable soil types and soils with high water
1420 tables. '13

1421 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1422 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1423 We support diversion of manure from equine operations from going to county landfills.

1424 We encourage government funding of composting facilities. '18

1425 We oppose being required to field stack mushroom soil compost. '18

1426 We support adequate funding of the Manure Transport Program to assist with transport
1427 and movement of livestock manure and poultry litter to all parts of the State. '21

1428 **Soil Testing**

1429 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1430 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '13

1431

1432 **NUTRIENT/CARBON TRADING**

1433 We oppose government-mandated carbon sequestration or credit trading. '21

1434 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient and carbon reduction on both farms and
1435 forests that allow farmers and/or landowners to receive fair compensation for nutrient removal
1436 and/or carbon reductions. '21

1437 We support allowing Shellfish/Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for
1438 Maryland to meet its water quality goals. '16
1439 We oppose using the wastewater treatment plant's portion of the flush tax dollars to
1440 jump start a Maryland nutrient trading program. '16

1441

1442 **POULTRY INDUSTRY**

1443 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter.
1444 '17

1445 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a
1446 cost-share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the
1447 mandatory covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '17

1448 We oppose any effort to mandate moving poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '17

1449 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy
1450 generation. '17

1451 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1452 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere
1453 in the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '17

1454 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research-based guidelines for field
1455 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1456 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '17

1457 We oppose government regulations that would require chicken grower/poultry
1458 company layout policies. '17

1459 We support Delmarva Chicken Association's (DCA) best management practices for good
1460 neighbor relations, which cover house location on property, manure handling practices, carcass
1461 disposal system, vegetative buffers, odor prevention & control, and contact with neighbors. '21

1462 We oppose state mandated air quality monitoring or air filtering on poultry houses over
1463 and above DCA's best management practices for good neighbor relations. '21

1464

1465 **PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1466 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1467 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner. '23

1468 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production
1469 of an agricultural commodity on farmland. '23

1470 We oppose any mandatory retirement of land for buffers and setbacks. '23

1471 Government action that diminishes a property's value or an owner's right to use his
1472 property constitutes a taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should
1473 provide due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been
1474 diminished. The just basis for compensation must be at least fair market value. '23

1475 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and
1476 state levels. '23

1477 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the
1478 party disputing any property lines. '23

1479 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to
1480 notify all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified
1481 letter, in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '23

1482 Eminent Domain

1483 We believe the Supreme Court “Kelo” decision violates the basic principles and
1484 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1485 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1486 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We
1487 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and
1488 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of
1489 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1490 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop.
1491 ‘23

1492 We urge the elimination of the “quick take” condemnation process. ‘23

1493 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1494 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1495 property. ‘23

1496 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.
1497 ‘23

1498 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for
1499 the purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original
1500 landowner or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other
1501 than for which it was originally acquired. ‘23

1502 We urge that the compensation must include the total devaluation of the farm due to
1503 the negative impact, including visual, of any eminent domain project. ‘23

1504

1505 **PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS**

1506 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1507 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of land being purchased in this
1508 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1509 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1510 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to
1511 use part or all their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1512 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1513 ‘21

1514 We urge Program Open Space revenues that were diverted to the General Fund to be
1515 repaid. We support using a portion of these repaid funds to be used to increase wildlife
1516 management in the state. This could include state cost share for vegetative fencing/sacrificial
1517 crops and wildlife fencing. ‘21

1518 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1519 present state-owned land rather than the acquisition of new land. ‘21

1520 We urge diverting a portion of the open space funds to be used for managing wildlife on
1521 state owned land. ‘21

1522 We urge that the open space program continue to receive 0.5% of the Maryland real
1523 estate transfer tax. ‘21

1524

1525 **PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS**

1526 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1527 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding. ‘07

1528 Also, we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property
1529 owners of the easement rights of the PDA.'06

1530 We oppose any effort to usurp control of PDA maintenance from the PDA managers.
1531 Any federal, state, or private conservation practices should not prevent, hinder, or interfere
1532 with the maintenance of the PDA main, tributary, or right of way. '18

1533

1534 **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

1535 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1536 present to the public of the state. We urge the State and County health departments to gather
1537 as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs, and treatment of
1538 these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information. '06

1539 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1540 problem to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state. '06

1541 We urge funding for research by the University of Maryland on all tick species to reduce
1542 the incidence of the disease they transmit and carry. '23

1543 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1544 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

1545

1546 **PUBLIC OWNED LAND**

1547 Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in
1548 production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '18

1549 We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to
1550 acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to
1551 parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by
1552 willing sellers only. '18

1553 In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the
1554 governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges, and wild lands to
1555 determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate
1556 the sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '18

1557 The state should compensate counties for the loss of property tax revenue on public
1558 lands. '18

1559 We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or
1560 other recreational uses to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and administering these
1561 lands. '18

1562 We urge the state to require and implement a wildlife management plan for all public,
1563 wild and forest land. '18

1564 **Timberland Management**

1565 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use
1566 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting
1567 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '18

1568

1569 **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1570 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome, and most affordable food in the
1571 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the
1572 media unless substantiated and accurate. '08

1573 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.
1574 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based

1575 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors, and
1576 subsequent retailers. '08

1577 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and
1578 information regarding the local farm community. '08

1579 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the
1580 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland
1581 agriculture to the public through various media outlets. '08

1582 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that
1583 would:

- 1584 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1585 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1586 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the
1587 environment.
- 1588 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals, and educational displays.
- 1589 5. Include a speaker's bureau.'08

1590 We encourage state, county, and local government officials to take a more active role in
1591 supporting, promoting, and defending agriculture. '09

1592

1593

RAILROADS

1594 Where economically feasible, we urge the state government to take whatever action
1595 necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade them where necessary, including
1596 adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

1597

1598

RECYCLING

1599 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury
1600 to animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that
1601 would require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we
1602 recommend that a sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for
1603 recycling. '13

1604 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we
1605 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics.'07

1606 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '16

1607 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials,
1608 as well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

Tire Fund & Tire Recycling

1610 The state Tire Fund collection program should be expanded to include a program that
1611 would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state annually. '16

1612

1613

RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS

1614 When a utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be
1615 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.
1616 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be
1617 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary because of building waterways,
1618 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground where possible
1619 and that the areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars, and
1620 weeds by the utility company.'06

1621 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights of way or property lines
1622 when feasible.'05

1623 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used
1624 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the
1625 underlying property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be
1626 returned to adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee
1627 simple, the property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first
1628 refusal upon abandonment. '07

1629 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail
1630 use, and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will
1631 preserve the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. '09

1632 We oppose the taking of additional "Right of Way" to add "Bicycle" lanes to county or
1633 state highways. '15

1634

1635 **RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS**

1636 We believe in and support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which
1637 protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms. '15

1638 We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by
1639 law-abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, long arm, autoloader, or manual loader.

1640 Furthermore, we are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition. '15

1641

1642 **RIGHT-TO-FARM**

1643 To maintain the right to farm, we recognize our individual responsibility as farmers to
1644 help maintain the positive image of the ag industry by being respectful and courteous
1645 neighbors. '20

1646 We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect
1647 the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce
1648 without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to
1649 ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal
1650 production practices and agritourism activities. '22

1651 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland "Right-to-Farm" Law and recommend that it
1652 should be strengthened to protect and promote the enhancement of all commodities. '20

1653 We support an amendment to Maryland's Constitution recognizing that agriculture,
1654 which provides food, energy, health benefits, and security, is the foundation and stabilizing
1655 force of Maryland's economy. To protect this vital sector of Maryland's economy, the right of
1656 farmers to engage in farming practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state. '20

1657 Recognizing that agriculture is an essential industry, we recommend that right-to-farm
1658 laws extend to the ag-supported industry and supply chain. '20

1659 Before entering the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the
1660 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review to settle the nuisance
1661 complaint between the affected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in nuisance
1662 complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '20

1663 Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead
1664 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '20

1665 We support an amendment to the definition of a "commercial fishing or seafood
1666 operation" in the Right to Farm law to include the word "growing." '20

1667 **Funding to Protect Farms**

1668 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1669 environmental suits filed against farmers. '20

1670 **Right to Repair**

1671 We support legislation requiring agricultural equipment manufacturers to make
1672 available the necessary documents, software, and information to allow independent shops and
1673 individuals to repair equipment. '20

1674

1675

RIPARIAN BUFFERS

1676 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis. '22

1677 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1678 use. '22

1679

1680

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

1681 **Road Design**

1682 We suggest the State and County Highway Administration study newly widened as well
1683 as existing roads and correct any dangerous conditions created by landowners placing objects
1684 too close to the roadway. (For example: steel objects, reflectors, ornamental fences, or trees).
1685 '07

1686 We recommend that the State Highway Administration and county roads departments
1687 consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture when designing islands or the placement of
1688 road signs and mailboxes so that they do not prohibit or make difficult the passage of farm
1689 machinery. (For example, signs or mailboxes should not be placed directly opposite each other
1690 on both sides of the road. Staggering signs and mailboxes on either side of a roadway provides
1691 more room for the passage of very large equipment.) We suggest that batteries of mailboxes
1692 be used where possible and placed off the main road in new developments. '08

1693 We urge the State Highway Administration to improve access for farm equipment at the
1694 signalized intersections on Maryland highways. '06

1695 We urge the Department of Transportation to review the use of traffic circles on state
1696 highways to identify problems involved with moving farm equipment around the circles and
1697 through the intersection and to establish guidelines to solve the problems. '09

1698 We believe that land involved in highway interchanges should be properly designed and
1699 landscaped so that it is free of sight obstructions, attractive and easily maintained. We
1700 encourage the state to plant buffers on state property, including state highways on/off ramps
1701 and median strips and maintain them following the same requirements placed on CREP areas.
1702 '05

1703 No curbing should be placed on rural roads with less than 13 feet from the centerline to
1704 the curb. '07

1705 **Road Construction**

1706 An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We
1707 urge that a highway system, including adequate bridges, be built and maintained, to provide for
1708 the movement of goods and produce throughout the state. However, due to the high cost of
1709 highway construction, we recommend, where feasible, that existing roads and bridges be
1710 upgraded and improved instead of building new roads along different routes. '07

1711 We recommend that existing bridges be widened, and new bridges be constructed with
1712 a minimum width of 20 feet, to accommodate safe movement of modern farm equipment. '20

1713 We oppose any additional Chesapeake Bay crossing that is not at the location of the
1714 current Bay Bridge spans. '19

1715 We encourage the State Highway Administration to install painted islands rather than
1716 concrete islands at intersections wherever feasible. '07

1717 We urge that revenues from the highway fuel taxes be used for highway construction
1718 and maintenance only. '11

1719 We believe that the state's share of the overall operation and maintenance cost of the
1720 mass transit systems should be limited to 25%, with 75% coming from the users and the local
1721 jurisdiction served by the system. '14

1722 We urge the counties and state to enforce the law requiring anyone working along our
1723 roads to provide safety devices and personnel to ensure safe travel, as does the State Highway
1724 Department. '07

1725 We urge the State Highway Administration and counties to proceed with urgently
1726 needed road construction projects as rural roads need to be maintained to a higher standard
1727 for the safety of our farmers and our residents. '22

1728 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project
1729 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land
1730 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has
1731 been initiated. '08

1732 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

1733 **Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)**

1734 We urge a change in the law to mandate the trimming of tree limbs on both new growth
1735 and existing trees for safe travel of all vehicles on roadways. '11

1736 We support state legislation that requires, on both state and county roads, trees and
1737 brush be maintained at a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge and to a clearance of at
1738 least 18 feet across the full maintenance width of all public roads. Further, we recommend the
1739 placement of new poles and guide wires at a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge, with
1740 reflective material placed thereon. '22

1741 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1742 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and enhance scenic views.'12

1743 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments control invasive species
1744 and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '17

1745 The government should increase the level of maintenance to ensure safe passage of
1746 vehicles.'12

1747 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1748 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of
1749 the tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous, and diseased
1750 trees.'12

1751 We highly recommend that State Highway Administration (SHA) send at least a 6-month
1752 notice to adjacent landowners whenever plantings are being proposed along SHA rights-of-way
1753 that are currently in agricultural production. '15

1754 We urge the State Highway Administration to accommodate the movement of farm
1755 equipment into fields in agricultural production when installing right of way projects. '17

1756 We strongly encourage SHA to continue to allow farming on these rights-of-way and
1757 work with farmers to find other suitable sites for plantings on adjacent land. '15

1758 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1759 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the

1760 trimming and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and
1761 simplify the permit process. '10

1762

1763 **RURAL COMMUNITIES**

1764 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was created
1765 to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13

1766 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
1767 county governments during the legislative session. '13

1768 We strongly support legislation defining rural broadband/internet as a public necessity.
1769 '20

1770

1771 **RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM**

1772 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
1773 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
1774 Preservation Program.'06

1775 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
1776 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
1777 '07

1778

1779 **SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

1780 **School Standards**

1781 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
1782 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
1783 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all
1784 and should be enforced by the school system. '07

1785 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

1786 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging
1787 in illegal drug activity. '07

1788 **School Lunches & Farm to School Program**

1789 We support the state's Farm-to-School program and recommend funding be increased.
1790 We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote this program and
1791 purchase more locally grown products for school nutrition programs. '17

1792 **School Year**

1793 We oppose a year-round and/or a staggered school year. We encourage all local/county
1794 Boards of Education to develop a calendar that starts after Labor Day and ends no later than
1795 June 15th. '19

1796 **School Attendance Policy**

1797 Participation in agricultural education activities should be allowed as an excused
1798 absence and should not count against the number of allowable absences set by the county
1799 school system in question. '21

1800

1801 **SEAT BELTS**

1802 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other
1803 vehicles. '16

1804

1805 **SEED TESTING**

1806 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a
1807 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider.'11
1808 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from any certified seed lab. '14
1809

1810 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

1811 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate the current regulations
1812 concerning septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue
1813 economic hardship on landowners.'06

1814 We support requiring the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) septic systems in
1815 environmentally sensitive areas where significant impact to the Bay can be demonstrated. '11

1816 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

1817 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished
1818 land value incurred by any septic legislation. '11
1819

1820 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1821 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
1822 the federal Class A standard. '23

1823 We oppose any legislation that would allow biosolids utilized on farmland to be less
1824 restrictive than the standards outlined in MDA's 2012 Nutrient Management Guidelines. While
1825 we recognize that biosolids are an excellent source of natural fertilizer, we believe it should be
1826 utilized under the same standards as farm-produced natural fertilizer. '23

1827 We recommend that MDA classify dissolved air flotation (DAF) from poultry processing
1828 plant effluent as a biosolid. '23

1829 We support continued research and public education into sludge use to assure proper
1830 application rates and practices that protect farmland. '23

1831 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
1832 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability
1833 and potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be
1834 imported into Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '23

1835 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be
1836 held accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
1837 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator. '23

1838 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a
1839 composite test be taken and recorded each day.'23

1840 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
1841 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'23

1842 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
1843 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients.'23

1844 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
1845 that are more restrictive than State standards. '23

1846 We support the collaboration between NRCS, MDE, MES and MDA to ensure all nutrient
1847 management, conservation standards, and regulations are met when applying biosolids. '23
1848

1849 **STATE DESIGNATIONS**

1850 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1851 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts
1852 to change this designation. '07

1853

1854

STRAY VOLTAGE

1855 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies
1856 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and
1857 livestock. '07

1858

1859

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

1860 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that
1861 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

1862

1. It must be profitable for farmers. '08

1863

2. It must work to conserve soil, water, and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08

1864

3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08

1865

4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08

1866

5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture.

1867

'08

1868

6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency.

1869

'10

1870

7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic or regenerative farming practices. '19

1871

1872

TAXES

1873

Admission and Amusement Tax

1874

Agritourism activities should be exempt from admission and amusement tax. '22

1875

Capital Gains Tax

1876

We support an exemption from the Maryland capital gains tax on any profit realized
1877 from the sale of a perpetual conservation easement. '22

1878

Estate Tax

1879

We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland and forested land. '22

1880

We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and
1881 conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax. '22

1882

In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use
1883 value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real
1884 estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate.

1885

'22

1886

We support the position that all property used for agricultural purposes, whether it is
1887 rented to non-family members or not, shall be treated as qualified agricultural property under
1888 the provisions of Maryland estate tax law. '22

1889

Fuel Tax

1890

We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to
1891 allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level. '22

1892

We oppose increasing the state fuel tax even if it is based on inflation. '22

1893

Income Tax

1894

Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal
1895 tax code. '22

1896

Inheritance Tax

1897

We strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '22

1898 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-
1899 owned agribusinesses. '22

1900 **Health Taxes**

1901 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '22

1902 **Property Tax**

1903 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm
1904 or agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '22

1905 We urge amending the Agriculture Use Assessment Law to prescribe a standardized
1906 formula to ensure the full value of this special assessment is not offset by other adjustments in
1907 the total property value of the assessment for farm properties with a homesite. '22

1908 We urge amending the basis for a property tax assessment appeal to include evaluating
1909 the proper application of the agriculture use assessment to the total property value. '22

1910 The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly
1911 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '22

1912 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings including tenant houses. '22

1913 We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings. '22

1914 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
1915 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '22

1916 Farms operating on-farm food processing, alcohol production, agritourism, and value-
1917 added production businesses along with the buildings associated with these activities should be
1918 assessed at the agricultural use tax rate. '22

1919 **Sales and Use Taxes**

1920 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
1921 related services from the state sales tax. '22

1922 To clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases, we
1923 recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt
1924 card. '22

1925 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '22

1926 We support exempting electric use on farms from the sales and use tax. '22

1927 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1928 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
1929 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
1930 operation or structure. '22

1931 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1932 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as
1933 general fund enhancements. '22

1934

1935

TIMBER HARVESTING

1936 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1937 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest
1938 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1939 basis. '07

1940 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state
1941 and county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1942 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '12

1943 No conservation easement should prohibit timber harvest. '14

1944

1945 **TRESPASSING**

1946 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.
1947 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
1948 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
1949 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
1950 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
1951 injury sustained by trespassers. '13

1952 The maximum fine should be raised to \$5,000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
1953 destruction of property. '18

1954 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
1955 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs
1956 or paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission
1957 and to know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private
1958 land. '06

1959 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a
1960 jail term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine if a minor is convicted. The
1961 offender should be required to pay the property owner three times the amount of destruction
1962 including time loss and all court cost. '14

1963 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
1964 by others without written permission of up to \$5,000.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up
1965 to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore,
1966 violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '18

1967 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
1968 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
1969 existing laws and regulations.'07

1970 **Unmanned Aerial Systems**

1971 We request legislation be enacted so that no person, entity, or state agency shall use a
1972 manned aircraft, drone, or unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance or observation under the
1973 doctrine of open fields of any individual, property owned by an individual, farm, or agricultural
1974 industry without the consent of that individual, property owner, farm, or agricultural industry.
1975 '13

1976 We support the use of unmanned aerial systems in agricultural businesses provided
1977 written permission is obtained from the property owner. '14

1978
1979 **TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES**

1980 To achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1981 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion
1982 of this program; '08

1983 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient
1984 runoff into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban
1985 areas, as well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E., deicing
1986 aircraft and parking lots); '08

1987 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific
1988 research, as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately
1989 result in the Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1990 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with
1991 maximum cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the
1992 purchase of equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1993 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay to increase
1994 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '08

1995 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
1996 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08

1997

1998

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY

Bicycle Safety

2000 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
2001 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '20

2002 We recommend that scheduled bicycle, running or similar recreational events be
2003 conducted in a manner that does not inhibit agricultural activities. '20

2004 All bicycles should be required to have front and rear flashing lights and the rider wear
2005 bright and reflective clothing while riding. '20

Driver Safety Rules

2006
2007 We oppose any legislation to increase the age to obtain a driver's license.'20

Infrastructure Needs

2008
2009 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
2010 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '20

2011 We support the improvements to all Maryland Interstates.'20

Inspections

2012
2013 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
2014 motor vehicles.'20

2015 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.'20

Safe Movement of Farm Equipment

2016
2017 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of farmers. '20

2018 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the
2019 proper use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend
2020 that a mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to
2021 aid in recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and
2022 roads to improve safety conditions. '20

2023 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow-moving vehicle signs for any
2024 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced. '20

2025 We recommend Maryland State Highway Administration use the digital messaging signs
2026 to warn motorists of agricultural equipment use on highways during spring planting season,
2027 summer small grain harvest and fall grain harvest. '20

2028 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
2029 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
2030 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are
2031 (1) properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped
2032 approached another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the
2033 "other driver" being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her
2034 vehicle. '20

2035 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
2036 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
2037 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '20

2038 **Truck Regulations**

2039 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent
2040 with those of neighboring states. '20

2041 We support the K Tag radius being 25 miles or more. '20

2042 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal, but an axle weight is off, enforcement
2043 personnel should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '20

2044 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products
2045 up to 25 miles. '20

2046 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws.'20

2047 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
2048 agricultural or commercial traffic on state highways. '20

2049 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
2050 '20

2051 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '20

2052 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
2053 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive
2054 Maintenance Program. '20

2055 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
2056 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should
2057 be established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time
2058 periods to get them repaired. '20

2059 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. '20

2060 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within
2061 each class. '20

2062 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
2063 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
2064 transportation of farm commodities. '20

2065 We support the right of farmers to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers in any
2066 state where it is legal to do so. We further support the right of farmers to employ a title service
2067 agency or agent operating outside of Maryland to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers
2068 in any state where it is legal to do so. '20

2069

2070

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND

2071 **Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority**

2072 We recommend the University System of Maryland establish an Ag Producers Board of
2073 Advisors. '21

2074 We recommend to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
2075 University of Maryland College Park that they establish an Ag Producers Board of Advisors that
2076 includes a MDFB representative. '21

2077 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
2078 but not at the expense of "traditional agriculture" courses and research. '21

2079 We urge the University System of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional
2080 research as is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support

2081 University of Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education
2082 programs. '21

2083 We support the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to advise and assist the UMD
2084 Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future structure of UMD Extension.
2085 This committee should consist of commodity groups and stakeholders to represent the
2086 different geographic regions of the state. '23

2087 We recommend the re-establishment of county Extension Advisory Committees /
2088 Councils. '23

2089 We support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and
2090 its tripartite mission of research, teaching, and extension. Because of the many challenges for
2091 Agriculture in the future, which cannot be met without qualified graduates, we urge curricula
2092 for students who aspire to be the future farmers, agriculture leaders, ag teachers, extension
2093 agents, scientists, and more. '21

2094 We urge the University System of Maryland to fill and support faculty positions relevant
2095 to the Maryland agriculture industry needs. '21

2096 **Funding**

2097 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
2098 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
2099 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
2100 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
2101 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
2102 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '13

2103 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
2104 for funding the University of Maryland Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We
2105 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable
2106 funding support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the
2107 University. '21

2108 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

2109 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which aids farmers for
2110 business plan development. We request staffing to continue this valuable program. '21

2111 **Law School/Litigation**

2112 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
2113 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
2114 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state
2115 clients. Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm
2116 business should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being
2117 accepted by the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should
2118 provide equal representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '13

2119 **Research and Data**

2120 We urge the University of Maryland and the MDA to conduct further research on small
2121 grain crops that will maximize yields while utilizing fertilizers in the best ways for both plant
2122 uptake and environmental benefits. '12

2123 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
2124 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system so that
2125 research is more readily available to the producers. '21

2126 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
2127 varieties of vegetables, fruits, and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase
2128 competition with other areas of the country. '08

2129 We urge the University to continue the "Field Days" at the research farms. '21

2130 **Teacher Preparation**

2131 We recommend the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural
2132 Resources to continue to develop and expand the current program that provides an Agricultural
2133 Education major, giving students a specialization in Ag Education leading to a career path as an
2134 agricultural educator and/or extension educator. We support allocating new resources to the
2135 program. '21

2136 **Tuition**

2137 We urge tuition increases at the schools within the University System of Maryland be
2138 limited to the cost-of-living index. '21

2139 **University of Maryland Extension**

2140 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
2141 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
2142 compete in a competitive marketplace. The strength of Extension has always been at the local
2143 level. We strongly urge that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
2144 Agent/Educator. '21

2145 We strongly urge Area Extension director positions be eliminated and replaced by
2146 previous system of County Extension Directors, and that these positions be filled by individuals
2147 that have an extension background and leadership experience. '21

2148 Due to agriculture's ever-increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
2149 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment
2150 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
2151 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
2152 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11

2153

2154 **URBAN FARMING/AGRICULTURE**

2155 We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture. '17

2156 We support modifying zoning laws to promote urban farming/agriculture and the right
2157 to farm within urban areas and city limits. '21

2158 We support ongoing skills development training in urban farming/agriculture for all
2159 ages. '21

2160 We support the expansion of urban farming/agriculture and the creation of a clear
2161 pathway to land ownership for urban farmers. '21

2162 We support grant programs to provide infrastructure for urban farming/agriculture. '21

2163 We support the use of Program Open Space funds to purchase easements on vacant lots
2164 and greenspaces within planned urban developments and city limits to be used for urban
2165 farming/agriculture. '21

2166

2167 **WILDLANDS**

2168 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
2169 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas
2170 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
2171 management plans. '08

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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident Canada geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative impacts on agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the Chesapeake Bay. '09

We support the creation of a landowner ombudsman within DNR to focus on wildlife management on private lands. '17

We urge county and state parkland to have a valid wildlife management plan to control and properly maintain the wildlife population on this land. '17

We support the use of Wildlife Management Permits on both Public and Private owned lands. '21

We support permitting individuals traveling to and from wildlife management activities, that are authorized by the Department of Natural Resources, to transport a handgun for the performance of those activities. '21

Bird Control

Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

Because they pose a threat to livestock, especially newborn calves, lambs, etc., we urge removing black headed vultures from the Migratory Birds Treaty Act. '18

We oppose any law, regulation, or ordinance that would prohibit the use of certain devices for the purpose of repelling birds or other wildlife from agricultural crops. '22

We encourage a simplified and less restrictive process for controlling black headed vultures, and an increase in the number of birds to be eradicated. '23

Black Bear

We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western Maryland to other counties. '07

We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to control the black bear population in our state. '15

We support the creation of a Bear Management Permit system for the management of troublesome bear. '15

We urge DNR to create a bear depredation permit which would allow troublesome bears to be removed at the time they are causing damage. '21

We urge that the bear season damage permit apply to the farm where the damage occurs and contiguous properties, with the landowner's permission. '17

We support changes to the bear hunt which will grant landowners more equitable access to the hunt. '15

We support the hunting of bear by all agricultural producers and their immediate family on property they own during the regular bear season without going through the lottery. '17

Coyote

We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

Feral Hogs

Feral hogs should be regulated as a "varmint" species. '15

2218 **Deer**

2219 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of
2220 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '17

2221 We urge DNR to lower the ratio of deer per square mile. '18

2222 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
2223 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
2224 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '17

2225 (1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '17

2226 (2) List Sika deer as nuisance species due to extreme crop damage. '17_(Dorchester)

2227 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
2228 seasons. '17

2229 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd
2230 population count. '17

2231 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
2232 areas. '17

2233 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
2234 herd. '17

2235 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '17

2236 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent
2237 to agricultural lands. '17

2238 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and
2239 processing harvested deer. '17

2240 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
2241 management. '17

2242 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
2243 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of
2244 deer population. '17

2245 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '17

2246 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
2247 tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17

2248 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a
2249 plan to manage and control wildlife populations. '17

2250 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an
2251 increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17

2252 **Deer Crop Damage**

2253 Any refusal or increase in RMA (Risk Management Agency) premiums, specifically due to
2254 deer crop damage should enable farmers to use increased methods of deer harvesting,
2255 including the night use of DMP's (Deer Management Permits). '22

2256 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate
2257 enactment:

2258 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17

2259 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17

2260 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop
2261 within the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17

2262 (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17

2263 (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17

- 2264 (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
2265 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
- 2266 (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
2267 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
2268 disposing properly should be eliminated. '17
- 2269 (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to always use the weapon of
2270 choice for filling Deer Management permits. '17
- 2271 (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
- 2272 (10) The commercial sale of venison from certified processing facilities. '17
- 2273 (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
- 2274 (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the
2275 authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated
2276 as such. '17
- 2277 (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be
2278 deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17
- 2279 (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation
2280 non-profit under a crop damage permit. '17
- 2281 (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to help deter crop
2282 damage. '21

2283

Fox Chasing

2285 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from
2286 landowners to conduct the hunt. '08

Furbearers

2288 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

2289 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase
2290 a stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any
2291 fee. '08

2292 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

2293 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
2294 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture
2295 of fur-bearing wildlife. '10

2296 We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

2297 We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species like groundhogs if they
2298 are causing property damage. '17

Hunting Ethics and Liability

2300 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
2301 taking place. '07

2302 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
2303 manner like motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record after
2304 an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

2305 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
2306 the maximum extent possible. '06

2307 Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by
2308 hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting
2309 activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in

2310 safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established
2311 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

2312 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

2313 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
2314 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
2315 regulations. '17

2316 We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the
2317 purpose of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18

2318 On privately owned land, we support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the
2319 state. '23

2320 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
2321 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
2322 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
2323 during that season. '17

2324 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17

2325 We support extending the deer firearms hunting season through February. '21

2326 We support a longer firearm season on privately owned lands that overlaps the
2327 primitive weapon seasons that will maximize existing bag limits. '21

2328 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17

2329 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17

2330 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17

2331 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
2332 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren, and employees when hunting only on that
2333 property. We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and
2334 his/her spouse, children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural
2335 purposes (or a sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this
2336 farmland. We are opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license
2337 exemption to persons (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under
2338 the age of 16. '17

2339 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
2340 hunting or trapping privileges. '17

2341 We support funding for deer processing and donations programs from state General
2342 Funds or additional hunting license fees '23

2343 **Waterfowl**

2344 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2345 Service to take all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow goose
2346 population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

2347 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
2348 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

2349 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
2350 throughout, starting about November 5th. '09

2351 We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on
2352 or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level
2353 consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14

2354 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
2355 increase in bag limits. '08

2356 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

2357 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:
2358 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08
2359 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09
2360 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of
2361 property lines. '08

2362 We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows
2363 or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area to be charged with baiting. '14

2364 **Waterfowl Crop Damage**

2365 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

2366 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e., recorders or baiters) to
2367 reduce the snow goose population. '08

2368

2369 **YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

2370 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland
2371 through:

2372 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '20

2373 (2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '20

2374 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation
2375 easements; '20

2376 (4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

2377 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them; '20

2378 (6) Support and greater promotion of programs. '20

2379 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture
2380 to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '20