



Welcome to the inaugural **Hotline** for the **2024 Maryland General Assembly**! Every Friday during session, we'll keep you informed about crucial hearings and bills affecting Maryland agriculture. Stay tuned to find out how you can help us *strengthen and grow agriculture in Maryland!*

If this email has been forwarded to you, you can subscribe by clicking [here](#).

WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON

We're back! Our **Director of Government Relations Tyler Hough** will be working at MDFB's Annapolis office at **68 State Circle**. Need to reach Tyler? Email him at though@marylandfb.org or send a text or voicemail to (443) 878-4045.

Be on the lookout for: Bills being filed during these first critical weeks of session. As hearings get scheduled, we will let you know our stance on important bills – as voted upon by our members in the **2024 Policy Book**. As a reminder, our position may change if bills are amended post publication.

Did you hear? We're thrilled to announce our new **Legislative Intern, Olivia Scuderi!** A Montgomery County native, Olivia previously interned in Annapolis for **Senator Johnny Mautz** and was MDFB's **2022 Collegiate Discussion Meet Champion**. You can reach her at oscuderi@marylandfb.org.

Don't forget: Our top 3 policy priorities, as voted upon by our members; **Right to Farm, Agricultural Education, and Wildlife Management**. Check out this short [video](#) from Tyler Hough explaining the issues.

Have you registered for our **Day in Annapolis on February 7th** yet? You can do so by clicking [here](#)!

WHAT THEY'RE WORKING ON

Natalie Jones of [The Star-Democrat](#) reports that, "...over 500 bills were prefiled ahead of the

session's Wednesday start, with conversations about **public safety, budgetary concerns, health care, climate change and housing** expected to dominate the 90-day legislative session."

Keep an eye out for: The **Environment and Transportation Committee**, where the majority of agriculture bills get referred to. Delegate **Marc Korman** [takes the reins](#) as the new **Chairman**, with Delegate **Regina Boyce** serving as **Vice-Chair**, as well as the **Chair of the Subcommittee on Agriculture**.

Helpful Information from our friends at the **Maryland Association of Counties**: "[Bookmark This Cheat Sheet for Submitting 2024 General Assembly Testimony](#)"

WHAT WE'RE MESSAGING ON

A bill is expected to be introduced on [mandating cage-free egg production](#) in Maryland. Here is why that is bad for Maryland farmers:

Biosecurity risks: Transitioning to cage-free operations elevate the risk of bacterial contamination, leading to notable increases in hen mortality – especially when avian flu [has been detected in our state](#).

Loss of contract business: The vast majority of Maryland poultry farmers are contract growers. Banning caged operations would result in companies terminating their contracts and moving to other states.

Threat to small-scale egg farms: Small farms with caged systems may face financial challenges, like needing capital to retrofit their operations, potentially leading to closures.

Food insecurity: Eggs are often the most affordable protein for low-income Marylanders. A cage-free mandate would [send egg prices skyrocketing](#) for Marylanders who are already hit hard from inflation.

Cost/Benefit analysis is needed: Any regulation should undergo thorough cost/benefit analyses, ensuring that proposals are both scientifically grounded and economically viable for Maryland ag.

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Thank you for reading **The Hotline!** For questions about policy, contact MDFB's Director of Government Relations, Tyler Hough, at tylough@marylandfb.org. For questions relating to this publication, contact our Director of Communications, Jeb Burchick, at jburchick@marylandfb.org.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU®, INC. is a 501(c)(5) federation that serves as the united voice of Maryland farm families. Our organizational strength comes from the active participation of over 9,500 individual and family members who belong to the state's 23 local county Farm Bureau organizations. Since 1915, Maryland Farm Bureau has been committed to protecting and growing agriculture and preserving rural life. Maryland Farm Bureau is a proud member of the American Farm Bureau® Federation. For more information, visit www.mdfarmbureau.com