



Maryland Farm Bureau

2025 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 2025 as set by voting delegates 109th annual convention of the Maryland
16 Farm Bureau on December 9th, 2024.

17 We firmly support the principles of equality under the law as outlined in the U.S. and
18 Maryland State Constitutions. We support the USDA and Maryland Department of Agriculture
19 in developing and implementing programs and policies that provide access and opportunities
20 for all individuals who farm and ranch. '24

21
22 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

23 **Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

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

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

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

39 MDFB appreciates and urges continued support by the Secretary of Agriculture,
40 Maryland Department of Agriculture, for agriculture education, and for the principles and
41 funding request within "The Blueprint for Agricultural Education." '24

42 Maryland Farm Bureau supports establishing an Office of Agriculture Education to
43 support teachers and students, Maryland FFA, and industry leaders. '24

44 Maryland Farm Bureau supports recognition of the combination of the State Degree
45 awarded by Maryland FFA, classroom instruction, and Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE),
46 as an industry recognized credential (IRC) within the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. '24

47 **Career Technology Education**

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

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

56 We support the Environmental, Agriculture & Natural Resources Pathway (Certified
57 Agriculture Education Program). The program should include all three rings of the Agriculture
58 Education model (classroom/laboratory instruction, FFA, and Supervised Agricultural
59 Experiences) and be fully funded and staffed to ensure all local and state programs are viable.
60 '22

61 We support agriculture educators receiving extra duty contracts to cover extracurricular
62 duties, professional development, funding, and resources needed for robust hands-on learning.
63 '24

64 **Colleges & Universities**

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

67 Maryland should fund the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for farmers.
68 '19

69 **Curriculum**

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

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

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

79 We commend the Maryland Commission on Education in Agriculture for its study and
80 report concerning the enhancement of agricultural education in the state. We support the
81 Commission's recommendations to improve and enhance education in agricultural programs
82 throughout Maryland, especially the improved agricultural curriculum in Grades Pre-K-12 and
83 the recommendations for new and upgraded facilities. We encourage the continued efforts of
84 the Governor to expand and improve agricultural curriculum in the Maryland public school
85 system. '20

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

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

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

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

96 **Environmental & Agricultural Literacy Requirements**

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

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

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

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

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

112 **Funding for MAEF & Ag Education**

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

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

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

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

121 **Teacher Training**

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

126 **State FFA**

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

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

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

132 **Legislature Education**

133 We support and encourage Maryland State legislators to learn more about Maryland
134 agriculture through building relationships with Maryland farmers and encourage more farm
135 visits. '20

136

137 **AGRICULTURAL FAIRS**

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

141 We oppose restrictions or bans on the types of animals that are shown at state, county,
142 and community agricultural fairs, shows and exhibitions. '21
143 We support Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance exemptions for
144 agricultural fairs and Agri-tourism operations '24
145

146 **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

172 We oppose taking preserved ag land by eminent domain. '24

173 **Ag Preservation Funding**

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

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

179 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '21

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

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

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

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

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

193 **Appraisals**

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

201 **Mapping**

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

205 **Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation**

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

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

220 **Other Methods to Preserve Agriculture Land**

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

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

229 **Transfer Development Rights**

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

231 **Zoning**

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

234 We support the preservation of agricultural land and equity through the process of
235 donating, purchasing, and transferring development rights. However, state mandated down-
236 zoning is totally unacceptable. We support local zoning authority only. '21
237 We recommend that state required land use planning documents for Parks & Recreation
238 and Ag Preservation be prepared separately. '21
239 We recommend when any land is enrolled for ag preservation, the land be downzoned
240 to agriculture zoning. '21

241 AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

242
243 We encourage and support the passage of legislation to help resource-based industries
244 and alternative or value-added enterprises. We encourage the state to coordinate laws and
245 regulations with contiguous states. '10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

276 We encourage landowners to clearly define property boundaries for Agritourism
277 activities. '21

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

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

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

283

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

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

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

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

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

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

295 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture's right to use water for irrigation.
296 '23

297 We support Agricultural water usage being exempt from any usage control. '23

298 We encourage MDE to streamline the agricultural water withdrawal permit process to
299 provide more timely approval. '23

300 Under MDE's water withdrawal permit, a farmer who uses less water than allocated for
301 a given month/year should not be penalized and should not receive a lower water allocation.
302 '23

303 When a water appropriation permit hearing is requested by an interested party, MDE
304 should require the interested party to be in attendance in person or virtually during the
305 hearing. If the requesting party fails to appear, the hearing should be dismissed. '23

306 We request MDE use "irrigated inches per acre" rather than "gallons per day" when
307 formulating water appropriation permits. '23

308 Surface water screening devices should not be required on man-made irrigation ponds.
309 '23

310 We urge the state government to designate pond/river screening devices be eligible for
311 cost share. '23

312

313 **AIR QUALITY**

314 Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of
315 air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when
316 considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. '18

317 We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean
318 air (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in
319 reducing equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. '18

320 We support a healthy environment, including good air quality, but we are opposed to
321 emission control rules and standards for farm equipment and all on-road vehicles used to
322 transport agriculture commodities to and from the farm that would require the retrofitting of
323 our equipment to meet those standards. '22

324 We support the creation of a cost-share program to help farmers adapt to climate
325 change regulations. '22

326 We oppose bans on the tools and practices we use to farm. '22

327 We oppose exhaust emissions from farm machinery along with dust and particulate
328 matter generated from agricultural activity being subject to the federal Clean Air standards
329 instituted in 1997. '18

330 We oppose regulations dealing with exhaust of ammonia or methane gases from all
331 agricultural activities. '22

332 We recommend MDE allow the burning of agricultural use buildings. Buildings to be
333 burned should meet safety standards for burning set by county codes. Burning should be
334 supervised by the local fire company. '18

335 We encourage MDA to assemble an ag air quality expert panel with the mission to
336 review, vet and validate regional ag emissions research & publications to ensure pertinence to
337 real world conditions. This panel should consist, at minimum of the MD & DE state
338 climatologists, MD & DE extension animal science specialists and representatives from the dairy
339 and poultry associations. '18

340 We oppose the creation of a state carbon and/or Greenhouse Gas reduction tax/fee. '18

341 We Oppose requiring CAFO's to install air quality monitoring devices. '18

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

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

346

347 **ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES**

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

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

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

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

357

358 **ALCOHOL PRODUCTION – ON FARM**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

383

384

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS

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

388 We support continuing research and development of alternate and renewable energy
389 resources. '18

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

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

395

396

ANIMAL CARE

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

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

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

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

406 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in
407 educating the food industry, school children, the public and those elected to represent us in
408 government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,
409 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated
410 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.
411 '18

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

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

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

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

422 **Antibiotic Feed Additives**

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

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

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

428 **Livestock and Poultry**

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

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

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

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

435 **Vaccines**

436 We recommend additional research for developing diagnostics and vaccines, (including
437 mRNA, novel and emerging vaccine development) to understand the biology of organisms and
438 determining why diseases emerge. We and the international community must give priority to
439 current and future emerging infectious diseases. We support the use of mRNA vaccines
440 contingent on USDA and FDA approval. We oppose efforts to restrict access to any approved
441 livestock or poultry vaccine technology, including specific and/or prescriptive label
442 requirements for such vaccines or vaccine technology. '24

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444

ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES

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

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

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

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454

AQUACULTURE

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

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

463 We support legislation that will strengthen laws related to theft of oysters from
464 aquaculture operations, including enforcement of oyster theft under criminal property larceny
465 charges. We also support amending the elements of the current criminal charge law to allow

466 proof of cut buoys versus those frayed by natural causes. We recommend changes to the
467 Natural Resources Article to include language to enforce Maryland’s criminal property larceny
468 law against not only oyster aquaculture thieves who knowingly steal from aquaculture leases,
469 but also those who knowingly possess illegally harvested oysters. ’22

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AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD

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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

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BEEKEEPING

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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

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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

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485

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

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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

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We encourage the use of Brownfields as a means of solar generation in lieu of the use of prime and productive farmland. ’22

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We encourage the repurpose of Brownfields within planned urban developments and city limits to be used for urban agriculture. ’22

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CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS

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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

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We recommend further testing for other possible PFAS and chemical contamination sources in ground water. ’23

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No PFAS or chemical contaminant regulations should be promulgated at either the state or federal level without conclusive scientific data. ’23

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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

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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

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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

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

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

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

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

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

Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up

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

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

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

559 **Storm water Management Regulations and Fees**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

591

592 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

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

594 **Farmers' Markets**

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

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

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

601 We oppose the use of the title "Farmers' Market" for a store that is not truly a Farmers'
602 Market. We urge Maryland to adopt a law that defines how and when the term Farmers'
603 Market may be used. '24

604 **Labeling Requirements**

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

606 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

607 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise.
608 We urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture’s
609 efforts to improve marketing services. We support the “Maryland’s Best” marketing program.
610 ’21

611 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that
612 serve all citizens. ’21

613 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Commerce to continue its policy of
614 providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural industries. ’21

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

617 We support state grants and financial support for local co-ops, grain facilities,
618 marketing, and food processing facilities. ’22

619 **Deep Water Terminal**

620 We support a viable grain export terminal. ’21

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

623 **Roadside Markets**

624 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural
625 products. ’21

626 We encourage the enforcement of existing county zoning laws related to farmers’
627 markets and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer
628 merchants and/or non-local merchants. ’21

629 **Roadside Signs**

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

633 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

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

636 **Value Added**

637 We support the development of a statewide value-added processing system. ’21

638 We support the removal of the revenue cap for the on-farm-home processing license.
639 ’24

640

641

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

642 We oppose taking of land in conservation easements by eminent domain. ’24

643 **Best Management Practices**

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

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

651 Interpretation and definition of Best Management Practices (BMPs) must recognize the
652 economic impact and cost to the farmer. ’17

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

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

658 **Conservation Practices**

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

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

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

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

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

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

677 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

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

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

683 We propose changes to the CREP that are intended to keep prime land available for
684 production, reduce the economic incentive to take whole farms or major portions thereof out
685 of production, to remove the government as a primary cash rent competitor for valuable
686 agricultural land and to provide for more effective maintenance of land under CREP contract.
687 '17

688 Our proposed changes include the following:

- 689 (1) CREP contracts should be issued only on land that has a scientifically supported impact
690 on water quality. CREP should not be used to create wildlife habitat where water quality
691 benefit is negligible. '17
- 692 (2) Buffers should be variable, with a maximum width of 100 feet, based on topographical
693 and soil conditions to ensure water quality benefits and minimize loss of productive
694 cropland. '17
- 695 (3) Buffers established adjacent to ditches should have a maximum width of 50 feet and
696 should be smaller if prime and productive soils are impacted. Buffers should not include
697 trees within 35 feet of a ditch to facilitate maintenance of the ditch. The practice of
698 digging ditches just to enroll the entire acreage on farms should be prohibited. '17

- 699 (4) Regulations should be developed to require weed control on all land subject to a CREP
700 contract. The maintenance and control rules should be enforced. '17
- 701 (5) Mowing of CREP lands should be required annually if weeds cannot be controlled by
702 other means. Weeds of primary concern to adjacent farmers include, but are not limited
703 to giant ragweed, multiflora rose, burr cucumber, phragmites, autumn olive, mile-a-
704 minute, and kudzu, scrub trees and noxious grasses. '17
- 705 (6) Rental rates for future CREP contracts should be adjusted to provide for a sliding-scale
706 that pays more for land immediately adjacent to water and less for land closer to prime
707 and productive soils. Rates should be in line with local rental rates. '17
- 708 We urge federal, state, and local agencies to conduct field inspections on CREP contracts
709 that include noxious weed compliance. If landowners are not in compliance with the contract,
710 agencies should work with landowners to gain compliance. '17
- 711 USDA landlord/tenant rules should be strictly enforced to prevent losses to farmers who
712 have already invested resources into land being considered for a CREP contract. '17
- 713 Upon re-enrollment of land under a CREP contract, a farm should not be required to
714 destroy existing vegetation and replant if the existing CREP land has been properly maintained
715 and will meet the water quality and erosion control goals of the program. '17

716 COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

717 Cover Crop Program

- 718 The cover crop program administered by MDA should remain a voluntary cost-share
719 program and should be amended as follows:
- 720 (1) It should be made permanent. '07
- 721 (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs '10
- 722 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '17
- 723 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is
724 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
- 725 (5) Farmers should receive the same cover crop payment for manure incorporated land that
726 they would be paid for no till land, due to new manure incorporation requirements. '13
- 727 (6) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain
728 crops and hay acreage. '07
- 729 (7) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
- 730 (8) It should allow flexible planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '13
- 731 (9) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast
732 seeding. '07
- 733 (10) Aerial seeding should be funded as all other methods of seeding and should not exclude
734 double crop acres. '14
- 735 (11) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it
736 on the farm. '18
- 737 (12) The annual signup date for the program should be from June 1st through September 1st.
738 '12
- 739 (13) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested,
740 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09
- 741 (14) Fields should be allowed to contain blends of different cover crops if a nitrogen scavenger
742 crop is included in the blends. This should include the addition of legumes to such blends. '12
- 743 (15) Change seeding rates mandated for the cereal species that currently exist to be in
744 accordance with current University of Maryland Extension research findings. '12
- 745

- 746 (16) Give the option to adjust seeding rates and planting methods to facilitate late season
747 termination, green planting, intercropping, or relay cropping as an alternative to cover crop
748 burndown. '16
- 749 (17) Seeding rate should be calculated using germination rate and size of seed to achieve a
750 number of viable seeds per acre. '17
- 751 (18) Add sorghum to the eligible standing crops that the \$10 bonus aerial application for cover
752 crop can be seeded into. '19
- 753 (19) Recommend that MDA issue the first cover crop split payment before December 15th and
754 any final payments within 15 days after the crop termination report has been submitted. '19
- 755 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program.
756 '10
- 757 Maryland farmers and/or Ag organizations should have input on cover crop program
758 and rate changes before those changes are implemented. '14

759 **Cost Share Programs**

- 760 Cost share programs need to expand to include small animal unit operations. '14
- 761 We recommend the flat rates and components of a practice be reviewed and revised
762 annually with agricultural input to reflect current cost. '14
- 763 Maryland farmers/agricultural organizations should have input into state cost share
764 program changes before those changes are implemented. '14
- 765 We recommend that NRCS, Soil Conservation District and Maryland Department of
766 Agriculture resources be increased, and/or the approval process be streamlined to reduce a
767 backlog of cost share applications. '16
- 768 We recommend that the State fund the MACS program with General Obligation Bonds.
769 '17
- 770 We urge MDA's Maryland Ag Cost Share (MCS) program establish a higher cost-share
771 rate for Young and Beginning Farmers. '20
- 772 The State should continue to fund the Manure Transport cost-share program. '20
- 773 We urge the MDA conservation grants and the USDA conservation contract programs to
774 reevaluate contract terms if the cost of labor and materials increase over 5% before completion
775 of the contract. '21
- 776 We encourage development of a cost share program for producers to construct or
777 install a methane digester for any livestock waste. '23

778 **CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION**

- 780 We recommend that the membership of the Critical Areas Commission be comprised of
781 at least 50% farmers who own property within 1,000 feet of the critical area. '21
- 782 Due to the impact on the agricultural community, we urge county governments to work
783 with their county Farm Bureaus when they develop their local programs. '21
- 784 We are opposed to the inclusion of upstream tributaries and non-tidal water into the
785 Critical Areas Program. '21
- 786 We support legislation that would require the state to compensate, at the fair market
787 value, Maryland property owners who are monetarily affected by the Critical Area Legislation
788 and/or the Endangered Species Act. '21
- 789 The inability to harvest timber in the critical areas is creating an inequitable financial
790 loss for the landowner. We recommend that the landowner be compensated for this loss. '21
- 791 We are concerned about exemptions granted within the Critical Area for marinas and
792 other recreational water related activities. '21

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CROP PROTECTION

We urge keeping all federally labeled crop protection products legal in the state, counties, and municipalities. '19

We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them by approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '19

To help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to maintain a biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old chemicals, chemical containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '19

We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned chemicals. '19

Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water contaminated by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to label instructions. '19

Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not on emotional issues. '19

We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to farm his property. '19

We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '19

We oppose the collection and distribution of pesticide use data beyond that collected in the USDA NASS survey. '19

We oppose the establishment of a pesticide use data reporting system that would make information available to the public or to "interested" researchers. '19

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

Disease Prevention & Pest Control

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

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

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

Environmental Surcharge

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

Pesticide Stewardship

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

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CYBER SECURITY FOR THE FOOD CHAIN

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

DAIRY INDUSTRY

We strongly support the combined efforts of Maryland Farm Bureau with the University of Maryland Dairy Extension Program and the Dairy Industry Advisory Council to develop a program that will enhance the transparency of the pricing of milk to producers, raise milk prices, and increase the stability and viability of the dairy industry in Maryland. '24

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

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

Milk Marketing

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

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

All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as "raw, unpasteurized milk" only. '24

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

We support placing milk vending machines in all schools. '17

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

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

We urge schools to provide whole milk to students and all children. '24

Dairy Inspection & Regulation

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

We support the right for farms to produce and sell raw, unpasteurized milk for human consumption, with appropriate permits. '24

Raw, unpasteurized milk sold in Maryland must be produced in Maryland. '24

We oppose the use of cattle-share or farm-share agreements to circumvent raw milk sales laws. '24

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

DREDGE SPOIL

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

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

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

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

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ENDANGERED SPECIES

We support a voluntary conservation habitat reserve program that would provide incentives for landowners to establish and maintain habitat for endangered species. '22
Compensation shall be provided for landowners where use of the land is restricted by the Endangered Species Act. '22
We urge the state to eliminate from the list those species (threatened or endangered) that might have limited numbers in Maryland but are common elsewhere. '22
Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal law. '22
Any plant or animal that is taken because of an agricultural practice shall be considered an incidental taking. '22
We support adding the Northern Long Eared Bat (and other endangered bat species) to the list of species in Maryland authorized to have a Habitat Protection Plan (HCP) for incidental take to lessen the impacts to farms, forests, and land management. '24

ENERGY POLICY

We strongly support a comprehensive, long-term energy policy that fully utilizes domestic energy resources and aggressively promotes the access, availability, and affordability for agriculture. '22
We support an increase in off-shore and land-based drilling for oil and natural gas to enhance supplies, lower prices and reduce dependence on foreign sources. '19
We strongly support the development of shale gas in Maryland. '19
We urge that farm rates and demand charges be comparable across electric providers. '19
We oppose the banning of small gas engines. '21
We oppose the decommissioning of existing commercial power generating facilities until an equally or more powerful, viable energy generating source is ready to operate in Maryland. '24
We support that energy generated in Maryland should be for the benefit of Maryland residents. '24

Ethanol & Biodiesel Fuel

We support an energy independence and efficiency policy to include: (1) site approval, environmental issues, funding, and approval of renewable energy sources; (2) the use of renewable fuels in county, state, and federal automobile fleets; (3) support for the construction of ethanol and biofuels plants in Maryland; and (4) support for production and use incentives for ethanol and biodiesel. '19
We urge the use of some ethanol in gasoline and biodiesel and renewable_diesel in diesel fuel. '22
We urge new research to improve ethanol, biodiesel, and renewable diesel compatibility with medium and heavy-duty vehicles as well as farm equipment to meet new engine standards. '22
We urge that all state and county government vehicles (including school buses) use biodiesel and renewable diesel or ethanol fuels. '22
We support the use of renewable fuels as an alternative to electric medium and heavy-duty vehicles. '22

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

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

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

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

942 **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

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

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

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

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

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

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

956 We oppose the use of "farm" when referring to an alternative energy generation facility.
957 '19

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

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

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

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

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

968 Commercial energy facilities should have appropriate riparian buffer and setback
969 requirements. '19

970 Topsoil shall not be removed or stockpiled from the parcel of a solar project. '24

971 **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

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

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

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

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

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

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ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING

983 We urge changes to “standing law” so that no farmer who is in compliance with
984 applicable law could be sued by a third party. '12

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EQUINE INDUSTRY

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

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

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

994 We support the creation of incentives to horse owners to work with the Ag agencies
995 that offer technical assistance for implementing conservation and best management practices.
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FAMILY VALUES

999 We recommend that the Maryland legislature and the Governor should: (1) Pass
1000 legislation to make parents fully accountable for the destructive action of their children under
1001 the age of 18; and (2) Have the party involved fully monetarily liable for the destructive action
1002 they cause. If they are financially unable to pay, they should do so through community service.
1003 The monetary amount should be determined and paid in full. '15

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FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES

1006 We recommend that the State FSA Administration grant more power to the county
1007 committees to adequately staff county offices. '07

1008 We recommend more farmer input on FSA office closures before any implementation
1009 occurs. '05

1010 We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and
1011 consolidation of offices and services. '14

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FORESTRY

Forest Conservation

1015 We oppose any new publicly funded afforestation projects in Maryland that does not
1016 include a plan for the following: wildlife control, noxious weed control, and forest management.
1017 '21

1018 We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with
1019 regards to the harvesting of trees. '21

1020 Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural
1021 lands under the state of Maryland’s conservation or land use programs. '21

Timber Harvesting

1023 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1024 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest

1025 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1026 basis. '07

1027 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state
1028 and county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1029 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '12

1030 No conservation easement should prohibit timber harvest. '14

1031 We oppose time of year timber harvesting restrictions. '24

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GAMBLING

1034 We support that a portion of gaming proceeds continue to be utilized to supplement the
1035 purse and bred fund accounts. We support licensed video gaming and gambling at racetracks
1036 and/or other facilities and that a minimum of 25% of the total net revenue from these sources
1037 be used to supplement the purse and Maryland Bred Fund accounts to equal the average dollar
1038 value of the three highest states in the Purse and Breeding bonus accounts. Any expansion into
1039 other forms of gambling including but not limited to table games, sports wagering, Video
1040 Lottery Terminals (VLTs), Historical Horse Racing (HHR), and iGaming should benefit the equine
1041 industry, Maryland Ag Fair Board, MAEF, and agricultural education programs. '24

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GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

1044 We support the production and use of GMO products. We encourage the education of
1045 government officials and the public on the product safety, economic benefits, and
1046 environmental benefits of GMOs. '24

1047 We oppose legislation that would restrict the use of GMO commodities grown in the
1048 state. '24

1049 We support GMO policy decisions only at the federal government level and not at the
1050 state, county, and local government level. '24

1051 We oppose state mandated labeling of products made with GMO crops. '24

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GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS – STATE GOVERNMENT

Elected Officials

1055 We support a constitutional change to elect one senator per county. '19

1056 We support a House of Delegates apportioned on population with a minimum of one
1057 delegate per county. '19

1058 We oppose any method of selection for Clerks of the Court, Register of Wills, and Judges
1059 of the Orphans Court, other than election by the people. '19

1060 We urge local control in the selections of those responsible for operating our local court
1061 systems. '19

Ethics

1063 We support a change in current State law to allow farmers to become eligible for
1064 employment by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '19

Government Spending

1066 We support programs and funding intended to ensure the most vulnerable among us
1067 have access to healthy, affordable, and local food. '22

1068 We urge the reduction of government agency bureaucracy and duplication to reduce
1069 costs, fees and frustration of the general public. '19

1070 We urge all levels of government to operate within a balanced budget. '19

1071 We oppose any state food policy that limits, impairs, restricts, or bans the purchase of
1072 agricultural commodities produced in Maryland by State or Local agencies and institutions. '19

1073 We encourage State and Local agencies and institutions to focus on purchasing
1074 Maryland agricultural commodities and products. '24

1075 We support a state emergency relief fund to be administered directly to livestock and
1076 poultry growers, including contract growers, in the event of an animal disease outbreak
1077 resulting in production setbacks. '22

1078 **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

1079 We strongly oppose consolidation or transfer of any of MDA's current programs,
1080 functions, or authorities to any other department. We strongly support the transfer of all ag-
1081 related programs, functions, and authorities from other departments to MDA. '19

1082 We urge the MDA to establish official standardized office hours for all department
1083 offices including field offices. '19

1084 **Regulatory Reform**

1085 We strongly recommend that any new policy or regulation proposed affecting land
1086 management, nutrient management, environmental programs, or enforcement be required to
1087 include an economic impact study to evaluate the effect on vested persons. This shall be
1088 performed as part of the developmental process for each regulation and policy. '19

1089 We strongly recommend that the farm community continue to be consulted and be
1090 allowed to participate in the formulation of regulations and laws at all levels of government
1091 particularly when they adversely impact the Ag community. '19

1092 Agencies developing regulations should seek additional input from agricultural
1093 stakeholders. '19

1094 We strongly recommend all government agencies develop regulations in cooperation
1095 with other agencies so that there is a reduction in duplication and a consistency of purpose. '19

1096 We ask for removal of the question on Maryland's death certificate in bold print, "Did
1097 tobacco use contribute to the cause of death, YES { } NO { } UNCERTAIN { }?" '19

1098 Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said
1099 regulations. '19

1100 We strongly recommend that all State agencies review their rules and regulations that
1101 affect the agriculture industry and modify and/or eliminate those that are outdated or serve no
1102 purpose. '19

1103 Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and
1104 scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry
1105 industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All
1106 regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis. '19

1107 The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR)
1108 Committee should have the authority to prevent a proposed regulation from being
1109 implemented. The Committee should be able to refer controversial proposals to the full
1110 General Assembly for a vote or for amendment before an agency can implement the proposed
1111 regulation. '19

1112 We discourage passage of any law or regulation concerning Maryland agriculture
1113 products or processes, which would not apply to products or processes from other states or
1114 countries. Thereby not putting Maryland farmers at a competitive disadvantage. '23

1115 **State and Local Agencies**

1116 We support mental health programs and services to the Agricultural Community that
1117 provide education and information on where to obtain mental health services. '19

1118 We support the co-location of Ag agencies, Ag education and resources in regional Ag
1119 centers when feasible. '19

1120 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '19
1121 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
1122 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the
1123 Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict
1124 the access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on
1125 private property to no greater than law enforcement agencies. '19

1126 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
1127 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
1128 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate
1129 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
1130 practices. '19

1131 **State-Owned Farmland**

1132 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
1133 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
1134 converted to conservation uses. '19

1135 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

1136 Considering the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension
1137 program to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the
1138 present state pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '19
1139

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1140 **GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

1141 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We
1142 recognize the value of urban greenways but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural
1143 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with
1144 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or
1145 rails to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that
1146 adjoins the proposed greenway before a study commences.'07

1147 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any
1148 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the
1149 opportunity for input. Also, the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail
1150 use on the safety, health, security, privacy, and economic interests of the adjacent landowners
1151 and determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail
1152 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,
1153 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use
1154 of the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for
1155 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers.'10
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1157 **INSURANCE**

1158 **Crop Insurance**

1159 We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a
1160 tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. '07

1161 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

1162 Health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-
1163 employed individuals. '13

1164 We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated
1165 health insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits to better manage health
1166 insurance costs. '05

1167 We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge
1168 the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of
1169 quality health care. '13

1170 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent
1171 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.'06

1172 We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits
1173 to long-term care insurance. '10

1174 **Insurance Rates**

1175 We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates
1176 throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on
1177 experience ratings. '05

1178 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry because
1179 of claims that are considered "Act of God" incidents. '16

1180 We strongly oppose the increase of unemployment insurance rates to pay for the
1181 unemployment due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We support repaying the unemployment
1182 insurance trust fund with federal COVID funding. '21

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1184 **INVASIVE PEST CONTROL**

1185 We recommend that the state gypsy moth control program be maintained at a 250 egg
1186 masses per acre baseline. '18

1187 We strongly urge the state to develop a Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) education and
1188 integrated pest management (IPM) control program; and effectively communicate it to the
1189 public in order to suppress the SLF populations to levels below economic damaging thresholds.
1190 We also urge the state to take necessary measures to remove the SLF preferred host plant;
1191 Ailanthus, also known as the tree of heaven. '24

1192 We recommend Maryland DNR to list Sika Deer (Cervces Nippon) as an invasive species.
1193 '24

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1195 **JOHNE'S DISEASE**

1196 We acknowledge that progress has been made with the Johne's Disease program and
1197 request that the Maryland Department of Agriculture provide continued support for it. '23

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1199 **LABOR STANDARDS**

1200 We support labor policies that ensure Maryland agriculture has a legal, stable supply of
1201 workers, for both seasonal and year-long employment in all types of agriculture. '24

1202 We support equitable enforcement of and compliance with laws affecting agricultural
1203 labor. A sound agricultural labor relations program emphasizing the realities, importance and
1204 dignity of agricultural workers should be promoted. '24

1205 We support requiring that Department of Labor (DOL) employees notify farm
1206 owner/operators upon their arrival and prior to any inspection or questioning of employees. '24

1207 We support the right of farm workers to decline union membership based on their own
1208 convictions. '24

1209 We support legislation that would prohibit strikes in agriculture or in an agricultural
1210 processing plant during a critical period of production and/or harvest. '24

1211 We support the passage of legislation to exempt agriculture workers and point of sale
1212 workers in agriculture from minimum wage increase requirements. '20

1213 We oppose union organizers from being able to access private property without the
1214 owner's consent. '24

1215 We oppose mandatory overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours
1216 per week. '24

1217 We oppose mandatory farm worker contracts. '24

1218 We oppose any effort to change age restrictions in current farm labor. '24

1219 **Seasonal Workforce**

1220 We support an adequate supply of authorized temporary seasonal agricultural workers.
1221 '24

1222 We support the current H-2A program, in addition to any new agricultural visa program
1223 established, while seeking its modernization and improved efficiency. It needs to be an
1224 uncapped visa program that is open to all segments of agriculture and flexible enough to
1225 provide for the differing needs of farmers to include a year-round program. '24

1226 We support streamlining the H-2A and H-2B process. '24

1227 We support improved training for employers to understand and better use the H-2A
1228 program and provide better information for new users of the program. '24

1229 We support elimination of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR). Until then, we support
1230 legislation that would cap year-over-year increases. '24

1231 We support maximum transparency in the investigation practices by DOL; including but
1232 not limited to full disclosure of DOL policies, guidelines, and operating procedures. '24

1233 We oppose fees on the H-2A program that provide funding for program unrelated to
1234 guest worker visas. '24

1235 We oppose requiring farmers who participate in federal guestworker programs to pay
1236 wage rates excessively higher than the state or federal minimum wage. '24

1237 We oppose applying any labor law that does not currently apply to an H-2A visa worker.
1238 '24

1239 **Workers' Compensation**

1240 We support allowing farm employers to continue to provide workers' compensation
1241 coverage on a voluntary basis for family members and farm workers regardless of annual
1242 wages. '24

1243 We support changes in workers' compensation laws which will help reduce premium
1244 rates for employers. '24

1245 We support fair regulations allowing a business to self-insure. '24

1246 We support limits on the amount of compensation an injured worker may receive. '24

1247 We support strong penalties for abuses of workers' compensation benefits. '24

1248 We oppose requiring employers to participate in a state-operated workers'
1249 compensation plan. '24

1250 We oppose changes in workers' compensation policies or laws that increase costs to
1251 agricultural employers and have a negative impact on existing jobs and job creation. '24

1252 **Youth Employment**

1253 We support maximum opportunities for youth to work on farms. We believe youth gain
1254 important life skills, learn safety around animals and equipment, benefit from involvement in
1255 programs like 4-H and FFA, become interested in careers in agriculture, better understand that
1256 farmers are professionals and use best management practices, and establish a strong work
1257 ethic. Therefore, we urge government not to limit these opportunities. '24

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LAND STEWARDSHIP

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

LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING

Annexation

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

Growth Management

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

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

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

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

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

Foreign Investment

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

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

Permitting

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

Zoning

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

We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '22

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

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Penalties & Confinement

We urge the state to increase penalties for defacing and removal of “Mason-Dixon Line” markers. ’05

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

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

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

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

Judicial Process

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

We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity defense of “innocent by reason of insanity” to “guilty, but insane.” ’05

Investigation of Crimes

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

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

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

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

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

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM

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

LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS

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

1350 We oppose landowners, producers, or their lenders being held liable for the cost of
1351 chemical contaminants remediation, caused by application as a passive receiver without
1352 disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23

1353 **Contributory Negligence**

1354 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock
1355 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a
1356 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's
1357 responsible actions. '23

1358 **Agricultural Immunity**

1359 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '23
1360 We support immunity from liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers to afford
1361 the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '23

1362

1363 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

1364 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public
1365 monies.'06

1366

1367 **LOCAL/TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

1368 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08
1369 We support the State of Maryland increasing funding to the Tri-County Councils for the
1370 purpose of including and funding agricultural and natural resources development in their
1371 mission. '20

1372

1373 **MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

1374 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow hemp as an agricultural crop. '19
1375 We support increasing the legal THC content of industrial hemp to one percent. '22

1376

1377 **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

1378 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the
1379 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as
1380 necessary, including the purchase of needed equipment. '15

1381

1382 **NONTIDAL WETLANDS**

1383 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should
1384 be deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly
1385 compensated." '22

1386 We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that
1387 they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of
1388 public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost
1389 of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. '22

1390

1391 **NOXIOUS WEEDS**

1392 **Noxious Weed List**

1393 We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, Rosa
1394 multiflora (multi-flora rose) (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry),
1395 Microstegium vimineum (Japanese stilt grass), Amaranthus palmeri (Palmer Amaranth), Asiatic

1396 tearthumb (mile-a-minute vine or kudzu), *Celastrus orbiculatus* (Asiatic bitter-sweet vine) and
1397 *Ailanthus* (Tree of Heaven) placed on the noxious weed list. '22

1398 We urge the SHA to submit a realistic fiscal impact statement related to adding palmer
1399 amaranth to the noxious weed list. '18

1400 **Compliance on Government-Owned Land and Private Land Under Government Contract**

1401 We insist that local, county, state, federal governments, and public utilities control
1402 invasive species and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by
1403 them. '18

1404 We urge FSA and NRCS to educate private landowners about invasive species of weeds
1405 and control methods before and during the contract period. '18

1406 **Enforcement**

1407 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the
1408 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,
1409 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's
1410 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '18

1411 We recommend increasing the funding to provide proper enforcement of the noxious
1412 weed law and maintain a viable education, prevention, and treatment program. '18

1413 We recommend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators
1414 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are
1415 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1416 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1417 non-crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all the control methods outlined by the
1418 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '18

1419 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1420 conservation programs, so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1421 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '18

1422 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop procedures for adding
1423 new weeds to the noxious weed list. These procedures should include an estimate of the cost
1424 to control the weed. '18

1425 **Public Education**

1426 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1427 public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of noxious weeds. '18

1428 **Weed Control Methods**

1429 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1430 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and
1431 eliminate these noxious weeds. '18

1432 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious
1433 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will
1434 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination. '18

1435 We support the state providing cost share for control of noxious weeds and other weeds
1436 of concern. '18

1437 We support counties and the state to work with HOAs, Forest Conservation Easements
1438 and Storm Water Management Areas to control their noxious weeds and weeds of concern. '18

1439 **Weeds of Concern**

1440 We urge MDA in cooperation with University of Maryland Extension to create a weeds
1441 of concern program that identifies new or herbicide resistant weeds of concern, educates state
1442 agencies, landowners, and farmers on how to identify and manage these weeds, and

1443 encourages state agencies, landowners and farmers to implement best management practices
1444 to control these weeds. '18

1445

1446

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Nutrient Management for Farms

1448 We support nutrient management programs and that all farmers should apply nutrients
1449 in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound science. '21

1450 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of
1451 nutrient management plans. '09

1452 We support a nutrient management program that: (1) produces real water quality
1453 improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3) requires reasonable recordkeeping,
1454 (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5) provides adequate flexibility for
1455 farmers to properly manage their operations, (6) provides appropriate inspection and
1456 enforcement, and (7) provides appropriate incentives to offset operating and capital costs
1457 incurred by complying with the requirements of the program. '12

1458 We are opposed to the changes to the nutrient management regulations, which make
1459 MD agriculture less competitive by increasing the cost and difficulty of farming in Maryland
1460 without compensation. '13

1461 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.
1462 '10

1463 We recommend that MDA and the University of Maryland review and update the
1464 nitrogen use recommendations in UMD's Numan Pro software program, which is used for
1465 nutrient management plans. '18

1466 We recommend the composting of animals be an approved method of disposing of
1467 animal mortalities on the farm. '17

1468 We oppose expanding the Phosphorus Management Tool beyond the current
1469 implementation. '21

1470 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient
1471 management program to achieve the following:

1472 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05

1473 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.
1474 '05

1475 c. Prevent yield capping. '05

1476 d. We encourage the leveraging use of production methods and scientific nutrient
1477 recommendations from all US land-grant universities to make Maryland's Nutrient
1478 Management Planning more efficient '23

1479 e. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12

1480 f. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on
1481 an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14

1482 g. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and
1483 technologies. '18

1484 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a
1485 farm based on a complaint. '09

1486 We support the optional on-line reporting system for Annual Implementation Reports
1487 (AIRs) but oppose that being the only option. '21

1488 **Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality**
1489 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain
1490 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer’s state or privately written nutrient
1491 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government
1492 entity. ’10
1493 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date, they should
1494 be properly destroyed. ’08
1495 **Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education**
1496 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1497 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. ’13
1498 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**
1499 We support permanent funding for the University of Maryland Extension Nutrient
1500 Management Program in order to hire and maintain adequate, permanent nutrient
1501 management advisors to provide nutrient management education and plan development. ’23
1502 *(Kent, As Amended)*
1503 All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. ’23
1504 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**
1505 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1506 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. ’08
1507 We strongly oppose the Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised
1508 Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by MDE. ’12
1509 We oppose public hearings for CAFO permit renewals that do not include facility
1510 expansion or modification. ’16
1511 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1512 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. ’09
1513 We oppose EPA’s continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. ’11
1514 We strongly oppose any fee structure for reviewing or inspecting MAFO or CAFO
1515 operation by MDE. ’14
1516 We support transferring the MAFO permitting program from MDE to MDA while
1517 decoupling the NPDES permitting process from the MAFO permit. ’17
1518 We oppose air quality monitoring as a requirement for MAFO/CAFO permits. ’21
1519 **Manure and Litter Management**
1520 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for
1521 crop production when applied in accordance with best management practices. ’20
1522 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.
1523 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies – beyond those previously conducted by
1524 UMD researchers – that include different soil types, locations, and manure types before any
1525 ban on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. ’10
1526 Universities within the Bay Watershed should collaboratively research the benefits of
1527 organic nutrients vs. commercial fertilizer on leachable soil types and soils with high water
1528 tables. ’13
1529 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1530 based on sound science recommendations. ’08
1531 We support diversion of manure from equine operations from going to county landfills.
1532 We encourage government funding of composting facilities. ’18
1533 We oppose being required to field stack mushroom soil compost. ’18

1534 We support adequate funding of the Manure Transport Program to assist with transport
1535 and movement of livestock manure and poultry litter to all parts of the State. '21

1536 **Soil Testing**

1537 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1538 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '13

1539

1540

NUTRIENT/CARBON TRADING

1541 We oppose government-mandated carbon sequestration or credit trading. '21

1542 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient and carbon reduction on both farms and
1543 forests that allow farmers and/or landowners to receive fair compensation for nutrient removal
1544 and/or carbon reductions. '21

1545 We support allowing Shellfish/Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for
1546 Maryland to meet its water quality goals. '16

1547 We oppose using the wastewater treatment plant's portion of the flush tax dollars to
1548 jump start a Maryland nutrient trading program. '16

1549

1550

POULTRY INDUSTRY

1551 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter.
1552 '17

1553 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a
1554 cost-share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the
1555 mandatory covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '17

1556 We oppose any effort to mandate moving poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '17

1557 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy
1558 generation. '17

1559 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1560 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere
1561 in the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '17

1562 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research-based guidelines for field
1563 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1564 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '17

1565 We oppose government regulations that would require chicken grower/poultry
1566 company layout policies. '17

1567 We support Delmarva Chicken Association's (DCA) best management practices for good
1568 neighbor relations, which cover house location on property, manure handling practices, carcass
1569 disposal system, vegetative buffers, odor prevention & control, and contact with neighbors. '21

1570 We oppose state mandated air quality monitoring or air filtering on poultry houses over
1571 and above DCA's best management practices for good neighbor relations. '21

1572

1573

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

1574 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1575 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner. '23

1576 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production
1577 of an agricultural commodity on farmland. '23

1578 We oppose any mandatory retirement of land for buffers and setbacks. '23

1579 Government action that diminishes a property's value or an owner's right to use his
1580 property constitutes a taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should

1581 provide due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner’s right has been
1582 diminished. The just basis for compensation must be at least fair market value. ‘23

1583 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and
1584 state levels. ‘23

1585 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the
1586 party disputing any property lines. ‘23

1587 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to
1588 notify all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified
1589 letter, in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. ‘23

1590 We oppose the Open Fields Doctrine. ‘24

1591 **Eminent Domain**

1592 We believe the Supreme Court “Kelo” decision violates the basic principles and
1593 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1594 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1595 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We
1596 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and
1597 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of
1598 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1599 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop.
1600 ‘23

1601 We urge the elimination of the “quick take” condemnation process. ‘23

1602 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1603 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1604 property. ‘23

1605 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.
1606 ‘23

1607 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for
1608 the purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original
1609 landowner or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other
1610 than for which it was originally acquired. ‘23

1611 We urge that the compensation must include the total devaluation of the farm due to
1612 the negative impact, including visual, of any eminent domain project. ‘23

1613

1614 **PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS**

1615 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1616 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of land being purchased in this
1617 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1618 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1619 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to
1620 use part or all their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1621 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1622 ‘21

1623 We urge Program Open Space revenues that were diverted to the General Fund to be
1624 repaid. We support using a portion of these repaid funds to be used to increase wildlife
1625 management in the state. This could include state cost share for vegetative fencing/sacrificial
1626 crops and wildlife fencing. ‘21

1627 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1628 present state-owned land rather than the acquisition of new land. '21

1629 We urge diverting a portion of the open space funds to be used for managing wildlife on
1630 state owned land. '21

1631 We urge that the open space program continue to receive 0.5% of the Maryland real
1632 estate transfer tax. '21

1633

1634

PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS

1635 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1636 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding.'07

1637 Also, we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property
1638 owners of the easement rights of the PDA.'06

1639 We oppose any effort to usurp control of PDA maintenance from the PDA managers.
1640 Any federal, state, or private conservation practices should not prevent, hinder, or interfere
1641 with the maintenance of the PDA main, tributary, or right of way. '18

1642

1643

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

1644 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1645 present to the public of the state. We urge the State and County health departments to gather
1646 as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs, and treatment of
1647 these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information. '06

1648 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1649 problem to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state. '06

1650 We urge funding for research by the University of Maryland on all tick species to reduce
1651 the incidence of the disease they transmit and carry. '23

1652 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1653 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

1654

1655

PUBLIC OWNED LAND

1656 Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in
1657 production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '18

1658 We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to
1659 acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to
1660 parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by
1661 willing sellers only. '18

1662 In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the
1663 governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges, and wild lands to
1664 determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate
1665 the sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '18

1666 The state should compensate counties for the loss of property tax revenue on public
1667 lands. '18

1668 We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or
1669 other recreational uses to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and administering these
1670 lands. '18

1671 We urge the state to require and implement a wildlife management plan for all public,
1672 wild and forest land. '18

1673 **Timberland Management**

1674 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use
1675 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting
1676 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '18

1677

1678 **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1679 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome, and most affordable food in the
1680 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the
1681 media unless substantiated and accurate. '24

1682 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.
1683 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based
1684 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors, and
1685 subsequent retailers. '24

1686 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and
1687 information regarding the local farm community. '24

1688 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the
1689 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland
1690 agriculture to the public through various media outlets. '24

1691 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that
1692 would continue to:

- 1693 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1694 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1695 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the
1696 environment.
- 1697 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals, and educational displays.
- 1698 5. Include a speaker's bureau. '24

1699 We encourage state, county, and local government officials to take a more active role in
1700 supporting, promoting, and defending agriculture. '24

1701

1702 **RAILROADS**

1703 Where economically feasible, we urge the state government to take whatever action
1704 necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade them where necessary, including
1705 adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

1706

1707 **RECYCLING**

1708 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury
1709 to animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that
1710 would require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we
1711 recommend that a sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for
1712 recycling. '13

1713 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we
1714 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics. '07

1715 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '16

1716 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials,
1717 as well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

1718 **Tire Fund & Tire Recycling**

1719 The state Tire Fund collection program should be expanded to include a program that
1720 would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state annually. '16

1721

1722

RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS

1723 When an utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be
1724 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.
1725 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be
1726 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary because of building waterways,
1727 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground and that the
1728 areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars, ~~and~~ weeds, and
1729 noxious weeds by the utility company.'24

1730 We support reimbursement to farm owners/operators for crop loss, soil compaction,
1731 business loss, and other expenses due to maintenance, installation, upgrades and any other
1732 activities. '24

1733 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights-of-way or property lines for
1734 any and all projects.'24

1735 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used
1736 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the
1737 underlying property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be
1738 returned to adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee
1739 simple, the property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first
1740 refusal upon abandonment. '24

1741 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail
1742 use, and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will
1743 preserve the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. '09

1744 We oppose the taking of additional "Right of Way" to add "Bicycle" lanes to county or
1745 state highways. '24

1746 We oppose any new utility easements through prime and productive farmland, as well
1747 as through preserved ag land. '24

1748 We support the return of the soil profile to its original state, as determined by the U.S.
1749 Soil Conservation District. '24

1750 We oppose any further fragmentation of farmland for the development of electric
1751 transmission lines, data centers and distribution hubs. '24

1752

1753

RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS

1754 We believe in and support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which
1755 protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms. '15

1756 We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by
1757 law-abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, long arm, autoloader, or manual loader.
1758 Furthermore, we are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition. '15

1759

1760

RIGHT-TO-FARM

1761 To maintain the right to farm, we recognize our individual responsibility as farmers to
1762 help maintain the positive image of the ag industry by being respectful and courteous
1763 neighbors. '20

1764 We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect
1765 the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce
1766 without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to
1767 ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal
1768 production practices and agritourism activities. '22

1769 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland "Right-to-Farm" Law and recommend that it
1770 should be strengthened to protect and promote the enhancement of all commodities. '20

1771 We support an amendment to Maryland's Constitution recognizing that agriculture,
1772 which provides food, energy, health benefits, and security, is the foundation and stabilizing
1773 force of Maryland's economy. To protect this vital sector of Maryland's economy, the right of
1774 farmers to engage in farming practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state. '20

1775 Recognizing that agriculture is an essential industry, we recommend that right-to-farm
1776 laws extend to the ag-supported industry and supply chain. '20

1777 Before entering the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the
1778 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review to settle the nuisance
1779 complaint between the affected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in nuisance
1780 complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '20

1781 Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead
1782 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '20

1783 We support an amendment to the definition of a "commercial fishing or seafood
1784 operation" in the Right to Farm law to include the word "growing." '20

1785 We oppose any state or local law or ordinance that regulates ownership and usage of
1786 machinery deemed useful in agricultural production and farm maintenance solely based upon
1787 any nuisance or environmental policy, to include noise, or gas and diesel engine emissions. '24

1788 **Funding to Protect Farms**

1789 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1790 environmental suits filed against farmers. '20

1791 **Right to Repair**

1792 We support legislation requiring agricultural equipment manufacturers to make
1793 available the necessary documents, software, and information to allow independent shops and
1794 individuals to repair equipment. '20

1795 **Lemon Law**

1796 We support the state of Maryland implementing a lemon law for ag equipment. '24

1797

1798

RIPARIAN BUFFERS

1799 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis. '22

1800 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1801 use. '22

1802 We oppose unpaid or mandatory buffers on any fields borders, or old field ditches
1803 running through woods. '24

1804

1805

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

1806 **Road Design**

1807 We suggest the State and County Highway Administration study newly widened as well
1808 as existing roads and correct any dangerous conditions created by landowners placing objects
1809 too close to the roadway. (For example: steel objects, reflectors, ornamental fences, or trees).

1810 '07

1811 We recommend that the State Highway Administration and county roads departments
1812 consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture when designing islands or the placement of
1813 road signs and mailboxes so that they do not prohibit or make difficult the passage of farm
1814 machinery. (For example, signs or mailboxes should not be placed directly opposite each other
1815 on both sides of the road. Staggering signs and mailboxes on either side of a roadway provides
1816 more room for the passage of very large equipment.) We suggest that batteries of mailboxes
1817 be used where possible and placed off the main road in new developments. '08

1818 We urge the State Highway Administration to improve access for farm equipment at the
1819 signalized intersections on Maryland highways. '06

1820 We urge the Department of Transportation to review the use of traffic circles on state
1821 highways to identify problems involved with moving farm equipment around the circles and
1822 through the intersection and to establish guidelines to solve the problems.'09

1823 We believe that land involved in highway interchanges should be properly designed and
1824 landscaped so that it is free of sight obstructions, attractive and easily maintained. We
1825 encourage the state to plant buffers on state property, including state highways on/off ramps
1826 and median strips and maintain them following the same requirements placed on CREP areas.
1827 '05

1828 No curbing should be placed on rural roads with less than 13 feet from the centerline to
1829 the curb.'07

1830 **Road Construction**

1831 An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We
1832 urge that a highway system, including adequate bridges, be built and maintained, to provide for
1833 the movement of goods and produce throughout the state. However, due to the high cost of
1834 highway construction, we recommend, where feasible, that existing roads and bridges be
1835 upgraded and improved instead of building new roads along different routes.'07

1836 We recommend that existing bridges be widened, and new bridges be constructed with
1837 a minimum width of 20 feet, to accommodate safe movement of modern farm equipment. '20

1838 We oppose any additional Chesapeake Bay crossing that is not at the location of the
1839 current Bay Bridge spans. '19

1840 We encourage the State Highway Administration to install painted islands rather than
1841 concrete islands at intersections wherever feasible. '07

1842 We urge that revenues from the highway fuel taxes be used for highway construction
1843 and maintenance only. '11

1844 We believe that the state's share of the overall operation and maintenance cost of the
1845 mass transit systems should be limited to 25%, with 75% coming from the users and the local
1846 jurisdiction served by the system. '14

1847 We urge the counties and state to enforce the law requiring anyone working along our
1848 roads to provide safety devices and personnel to ensure safe travel, as does the State Highway
1849 Department. '07

1850 We urge the State Highway Administration and counties to proceed with urgently
1851 needed road construction projects as rural roads need to be maintained to a higher standard
1852 for the safety of our farmers and our residents. '22

1853 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project
1854 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land
1855 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has
1856 been initiated. '08

1857 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

1858 **Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)**

1859 We urge a change in the law to mandate the trimming of tree limbs on both new growth
1860 and existing trees for safe travel of all vehicles on roadways. '11

1861 We support state legislation that requires, on both state and county roads, trees and
1862 brush be maintained at a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge and to a clearance of at
1863 least 18 feet across the full maintenance width of all public roads. Further, we recommend the
1864 placement of new poles and guide wires at a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge, with
1865 reflective material placed thereon. '22

1866 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1867 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and enhance scenic views.'12

1868 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments control invasive species
1869 and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '17

1870 The government should increase the level of maintenance to ensure safe passage of
1871 vehicles.'12

1872 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1873 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of
1874 the tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous, and diseased
1875 trees.'12

1876 We highly recommend that State Highway Administration (SHA) send at least a 6-month
1877 notice to adjacent landowners whenever plantings are being proposed along SHA rights-of-way
1878 that are currently in agricultural production. '15

1879 We urge the State Highway Administration to accommodate the movement of farm
1880 equipment into fields in agricultural production when installing right of way projects. '17

1881 We strongly encourage SHA to continue to allow farming on these rights-of-way and
1882 work with farmers to find other suitable sites for plantings on adjacent land. '15

1883 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1884 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the
1885 trimming and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and
1886 simplify the permit process. '10

1887

1888

RURAL COMMUNITIES

1889 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was created
1890 to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13

1891 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
1892 county governments during the legislative session. '13

1893 We strongly support legislation defining rural broadband/internet as a public necessity.
1894 '20

1895

1896

RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM

1897 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
1898 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
1899 Preservation Program.'06

1900 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
1901 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
1902 '07

1903

1904 **SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

1905 **School Standards**

1906 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
1907 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
1908 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all
1909 and should be enforced by the school system. '07

1910 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

1911 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging
1912 in illegal drug activity. '07

1913 **School Lunches & Farm to School Program**

1914 We support the state's Farm-to-School program and recommend funding be increased.
1915 We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote this program and
1916 purchase more locally grown products for school nutrition programs. '17

1917 **School Year**

1918 We oppose a year-round and/or a staggered school year. We encourage all local/county
1919 Boards of Education to develop a calendar that starts after Labor Day and ends no later than
1920 June 15th. '19

1921 **School Attendance Policy**

1922 Participation in agricultural education activities should be allowed as an excused
1923 absence and should not count against the number of allowable absences set by the county
1924 school system in question. '21

1925
1926 **SEAT BELTS**

1927 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other
1928 vehicles. '16

1929
1930 **SEED TESTING**

1931 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a
1932 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider. '11
1933 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from any certified seed lab. '14

1934
1935 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

1936 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate the current regulations
1937 concerning septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue
1938 economic hardship on landowners. '06

1939 We support requiring the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) septic systems in
1940 environmentally sensitive areas where significant impact to the Bay can be demonstrated. '11

1941 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

1942 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished
1943 land value incurred by any septic legislation. '11

1944
1945 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1946 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
1947 the federal Class A standard. '23

1948 We oppose any legislation that would allow biosolids utilized on farmland to be less
1949 restrictive than the standards outlined in MDA's 2012 Nutrient Management Guidelines. While

1950 we recognize that biosolids are an excellent source of natural fertilizer, we believe it should be
1951 utilized under the same standards as farm-produced natural fertilizer. '23

1952 We recommend that MDA classify dissolved air flotation (DAF) from poultry processing
1953 plant effluent as a biosolid. '23

1954 We support continued research and public education into sludge use to assure proper
1955 application rates and practices that protect farmland. '23

1956 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
1957 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability
1958 and potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be
1959 imported into Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '23

1960 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be
1961 held accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
1962 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator. '23

1963 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a
1964 composite test be taken and recorded each day. '23

1965 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
1966 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced. '23

1967 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
1968 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '23

1969 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
1970 that are more restrictive than State standards. '23

1971 We support the collaboration between NRCS, MDE, MES and MDA to ensure all nutrient
1972 management, conservation standards, and regulations are met when applying biosolids. '23

1973 We urge the State of Maryland to follow the US EPA PFAS Strategic Roadmap and adopt
1974 limits for PFAS contamination in agricultural products and inputs only when set by the
1975 respective Federal agency. '24

1976

1977

STATE DESIGNATIONS

1978 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1979 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts
1980 to change this designation. '07

1981

1982

STRAY VOLTAGE

1983 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies
1984 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and
1985 livestock. '07

1986

1987

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

1988 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that
1989 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

1990 1. It must be profitable for farmers. '08

1991 2. It must work to conserve soil, water, and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08

1992 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08

1993 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08

1994 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture.

1995 '08

1996 6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency.
1997 '10
1998 7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic or regenerative farming practices. '19
1999 Regenerative agriculture is defined as any production system that minimizes
2000 environmental impacts, maximizes production and increases the productivity of soil over time.
2001 '24

TAXES

Admission and Amusement Tax

2004 Agritourism activities should be exempt from admission and amusement tax. '22

Capital Gains Tax

2006 We support an exemption from the Maryland capital gains tax on any profit realized
2007 from the sale of a perpetual conservation easement. '22

Estate Tax

2009 We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland and forested land. '22

2010 We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and
2011 conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax. '22

2012 In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use
2013 value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real
2014 estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate.
2015 '22

2016 We support the position that all property used for agricultural purposes, whether it is
2017 rented to non-family members or not, shall be treated as qualified agricultural property under
2018 the provisions of Maryland estate tax law. '22

Fuel Tax

2020 We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to
2021 allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level. '22

2022 We oppose increasing the state fuel tax even if it is based on inflation. '22

Income Tax

2024 Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal
2025 tax code. '22

Inheritance Tax

2027 We strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '22

2028 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-
2029 owned agribusinesses. '22

Health Taxes

2031 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '22

Property Tax

2033 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm
2034 or agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '22

2035 We urge amending the Agriculture Use Assessment Law to prescribe a standardized
2036 formula to ensure the full value of this special assessment is not offset by other adjustments in
2037 the total property value of the assessment for farm properties with a homesite. '22

2038 We urge amending the basis for a property tax assessment appeal to include evaluating
2039 the proper application of the agriculture use assessment to the total property value. '22

2040 The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly
2041 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '22

2042 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings including tenant houses. '22

2043 We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings. '22
2044 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
2045 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '22
2046 Farms and businesses such as operating equine farms, farmers markets and on-farm
2047 markets, operating on-farm food processing, alcohol production, agritourism, and value-added
2048 production businesses along with the buildings associated with these activities should be
2049 assessed at a unified agricultural use tax rate. '24
2050 We oppose a tiered agricultural tax assessment policy. '24
2051 MDFB urges SDAT hiring of an ombudsman to assist with determining the assessment of
2052 agricultural properties. '24

2053 **Sales and Use Taxes**

2054 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
2055 related services from the state sales tax. '22

2056 To clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases, we
2057 recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt
2058 card. '22

2059 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '22

2060 We support exempting electric use on farms from the sales and use tax. '22

2061 We oppose the sales tax on Maryland-produced alcoholic beverages being higher than
2062 other food items. '24

2063 We oppose the creation of a services tax that would apply to agricultural services. '24

2064 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

2065 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
2066 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
2067 operation or structure. '22

2068 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

2069 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as
2070 general fund enhancements. '22

2071

2072 **TRESPASSING**

2073 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.

2074 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
2075 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
2076 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
2077 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
2078 injury sustained by trespassers. '13

2079 The maximum fine should be raised to \$5,000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
2080 destruction of property. '18

2081 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
2082 all legal purposes should be considered “private” and “posted”, with no need for posted signs
2083 or paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission
2084 and to know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private
2085 land. '06

2086 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a
2087 jail term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine if a minor is convicted. The
2088 offender should be required to pay the property owner three times the amount of destruction
2089 including time loss and all court cost. '14

2090 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
2091 by others without written permission of up to \$5,000.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up
2092 to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore,
2093 violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '18

2094 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
2095 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
2096 existing laws and regulations.'07

2097 **Unmanned Aerial Systems**

2098 We request legislation be enacted so that no person, entity, or state agency shall use a
2099 manned aircraft, drone, or unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance or observation under the
2100 doctrine of open fields of any individual, property owned by an individual, farm, or agricultural
2101 industry without the consent of that individual, property owner, farm, or agricultural industry.
2102 '13

2103 We support the use of unmanned aerial systems in agricultural businesses. '24

2104 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing the use of
2105 Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) beyond the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards.
2106 '24

2107

2108

TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES

2109 To achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

2110 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion
2111 of this program; '24

2112 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient
2113 runoff into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban
2114 areas, as well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E., deicing
2115 aircraft and parking lots); '24

2116 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific
2117 research, as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately
2118 result in the Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '24

2119 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with
2120 maximum cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the
2121 purchase of equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '24

2122 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay to increase
2123 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '24

2124 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
2125 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '24

2126 We expect all states in the watershed to accept equitable and proportionate
2127 responsibility for cleaning up the tributaries leading to the Chesapeake Bay.'24

2128

2129

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY

2130 **Bicycle Safety**

2131 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
2132 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '20

2133 We recommend that scheduled bicycle, running or similar recreational events be
2134 conducted in a manner that does not inhibit agricultural activities. '20

2135 All bicycles should be required to have front and rear flashing lights and the rider wear
2136 bright and reflective clothing while riding. '20

2137 **Driver Safety Rules**

2138 We oppose any legislation to increase the age to obtain a driver's license.'20

2139 **Infrastructure Needs**

2140 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
2141 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '20

2142 We support the improvements to all Maryland Interstates.'20

2143 **Inspections**

2144 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
2145 motor vehicles.'20

2146 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.'20

2147 **Safe Movement of Farm Equipment**

2148 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of farmers. '20

2149 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the
2150 proper use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend
2151 that a mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to
2152 aid in recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and
2153 roads to improve safety conditions. '20

2154 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow-moving vehicle signs for any
2155 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced. '20

2156 We recommend Maryland State Highway Administration use the digital messaging signs
2157 to warn motorists of agricultural equipment use on highways during spring planting season,
2158 summer small grain harvest and fall grain harvest. '20

2159 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
2160 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
2161 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are
2162 (1) properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped
2163 approached another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the
2164 "other driver" being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her
2165 vehicle. '20

2166 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
2167 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
2168 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '20

2169 **Truck Regulations**

2170 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent
2171 with those of neighboring states. '20

2172 We support the K Tag radius being 25 miles or more. '20

2173 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal, but an axle weight is off, enforcement
2174 personnel should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '20

2175 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products
2176 up to 25 miles. '20

2177 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws.'20

2178 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
2179 agricultural or commercial traffic on state highways. '20

2180 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
2181 '20

2182 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '20

2183 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
2184 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive
2185 Maintenance Program. '20

2186 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
2187 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should
2188 be established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time
2189 periods to get them repaired. '20

2190 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. '20

2191 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within
2192 each class. '20

2193 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
2194 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
2195 transportation of farm commodities. '20

2196 We support the right of farmers to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers in any
2197 state where it is legal to do so. We further support the right of farmers to employ a title service
2198 agency or agent operating outside of Maryland to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers
2199 in any state where it is legal to do so. '20

2200

2201

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND

2202 We oppose the University of Maryland (UMD) removing "agriculture" from the name of
2203 the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR), and majors, and programs. '24

Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority

2204 We recommend the University System of Maryland establish an Ag Producers Board of
2205 Advisors. '21

2206 We recommend to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
2207 University of Maryland College Park that they establish an Ag Producers Board of Advisors that
2208 includes a MDFB representative. '21

2209 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
2210 but not at the expense of "traditional agriculture" courses and research. '21

2211 We urge the University System of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional
2212 research as is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support
2213 University of Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education
2214 programs. '21

2215 We support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and
2216 its tripartite mission of research, teaching, and extension. Because of the many challenges for
2217 Agriculture in the future, which cannot be met without qualified graduates, we urge curricula
2218 for students who aspire to be the future farmers, agriculture leaders, ag teachers, extension
2219 agents, scientists, and more. '21

2220 We urge the University System of Maryland to fill and support faculty positions relevant
2221 to the Maryland agriculture industry needs. '21

Funding

2222 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
2223 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
2224 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
2225 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
2226 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
2227 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '13

2230 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
2231 for funding the University of Maryland Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We
2232 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable
2233 funding support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the
2234 University. '21

2235 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

2236 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which aids farmers for
2237 business plan development. We request staffing to continue this valuable program. '21

2238 **Law School/Litigation**

2239 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
2240 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
2241 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state
2242 clients. Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm
2243 business should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being
2244 accepted by the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should
2245 provide equal representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '13

2246 **Research and Data**

2247 We urge the University of Maryland and the MDA to conduct further research on small
2248 grain crops that will maximize yields while utilizing fertilizers in the best ways for both plant
2249 uptake and environmental benefits. '12

2250 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
2251 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system so that
2252 research is more readily available to the producers. '21

2253 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
2254 varieties of vegetables, fruits, and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase
2255 competition with other areas of the country. '08

2256 We urge the University to continue the "Field Days" at the research farms. '21

2257 **Teacher Preparation**

2258 We recommend the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural
2259 Resources to continue to develop and expand the current program that provides an Agricultural
2260 Education major, giving students a specialization in Ag Education leading to a career path as an
2261 agricultural educator and/or extension educator. We support allocating new resources to the
2262 program. '21

2263 **Tuition**

2264 We urge tuition increases at the schools within the University System of Maryland be
2265 limited to the cost-of-living index. '21

2266 **University of Maryland Extension**

2267 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
2268 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
2269 compete in a competitive marketplace. The strength of Extension has always been at the local
2270 level. We strongly urge that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
2271 Agent/Educator. '21

2272 We strongly urge Area Extension director positions be eliminated and replaced by
2273 previous system of County Extension Directors, and that these positions be filled by individuals
2274 that have an extension background and leadership experience. '21

2275 Due to agriculture's ever-increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
2276 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment

2277 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
2278 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
2279 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11

2280 We support the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to advise and assist the UMD
2281 Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future structure of UMD Extension.
2282 This committee should consist of commodity groups and stakeholders to represent the
2283 different geographic regions of the state. '23

2284 We recommend the re-establishment of county Extension Advisory Committees /
2285 Councils including re-establishment of mechanisms for flexible and timely access by County
2286 Extension personnel to their county finances so as to assure continuity of business. '24

2287
2288

2289 **URBAN FARMING/AGRICULTURE**

2290 We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture. '17

2291 We support modifying zoning laws to promote urban farming/agriculture and the right
2292 to farm within urban areas and city limits. '21

2293 We support ongoing skills development training in urban farming/agriculture for all
2294 ages. '21

2295 We support the expansion of urban farming/agriculture and the creation of a clear
2296 pathway to land ownership for urban farmers. '21

2297 We support grant programs to provide infrastructure for urban farming/agriculture. '21

2298 We support the use of Program Open Space funds to purchase easements on vacant lots
2299 and greenspaces within planned urban developments and city limits to be used for urban
2300 farming/agriculture. '21

2301 We support the creation of Agricultural Zones in urban areas throughout the State of
2302 Maryland. '24

2303 We support increased tax incentives for landowners and businesses that rent or lease
2304 property for Urban Agriculture Projects. '24

2305 We urge the designation of land from non-agricultural use to agricultural use in urban
2306 areas last for perpetuity or until the property is sold. '24

2307 We encourage the Maryland Department of Agriculture to seek additional federal grants
2308 for Maryland Farmers, especially those farming in urban areas. '24

2309 We urge that additional funding is allocated to the Urban Agriculture Grant Program. '24

2310
2311

2312 **VETERINARY MEDICINE**

2312 We support the continued sale of veterinary prescribed and over-the-counter animal
2313 health products and oppose further restrictions on their use, including any required on-farm
2314 reporting of drugs administered to livestock. Equine and agricultural animal vets should have an
2315 extended reporting time between 48-72 hours post administration due to the environment the
2316 vets are working in on most calls. '24

2317 We oppose any initiatives, referendums, or legislation, that creates standards above
2318 scientifically validated veterinary science and best management practices. '24

2319 We recognize agricultural animal veterinarians as essential farm worker personnel and
2320 support their inclusion in agriculture incentives. We support agricultural animal veterinary
2321 education in schools and recognize the curriculum as agriculture education. '24

2322 We support additional seats for Maryland residents at the Virginia-Maryland College of
2323 Veterinary Medicine (VMCVM) school. '24

2324 We support increasing the number of available educational opportunities for individuals
2325 interested in pursuing veterinary medicine. '24

2326 We oppose the collection of antibiotic sales data from veterinarians. '24

2327

2328

WILDLANDS

2329 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
2330 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas
2331 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
2332 management plans. '08

2333

2334

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

2335 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to
2336 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to
2337 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident
2338 Canada geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative
2339 impacts on agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the
2340 Chesapeake Bay. '09

2341 We support the creation of a landowner ombudsman within DNR to focus on wildlife
2342 management on private lands. '17

2343 We urge county and state parkland to have a valid wildlife management plan to control
2344 and properly maintain the wildlife population on this land. '17

2345 We support the use of Wildlife Management Permits on both Public and Private owned
2346 lands. '21

2347 We support permitting individuals traveling to and from wildlife management activities,
2348 that are authorized by the Department of Natural Resources, to transport a handgun for the
2349 performance of those activities. '21

Bird Control

2351 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any
2352 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and
2353 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

2354 Because they pose a threat to livestock, especially newborn calves, lambs, etc., we urge
2355 removing black headed vultures from the Migratory Birds Treaty Act. '18

2356 We oppose any law, regulation, or ordinance that would prohibit the use of certain
2357 devices for the purpose of repelling birds or other wildlife from agricultural crops. '22

2358 We encourage a simplified and less restrictive process for controlling black headed
2359 vultures, and an increase in the number of birds to be eradicated. '23

Black Bear

2361 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western
2362 Maryland to other counties. '07

2363 We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to
2364 control the black bear population in our state. '15

2365 We support the creation of a Bear Management Permit system for the management of
2366 troublesome bear. '15

2367 We urge DNR to create a bear depredation permit which would allow troublesome
2368 bears to be removed at the time they are causing damage. '21

2369 We urge that the bear season damage permit apply to the farm where the damage
2370 occurs and contiguous properties, with the landowner's permission. '17

2371 We support changes to the bear hunt which will grant landowners more equitable
2372 access to the hunt. '15
2373 We support the hunting of bear by all agricultural producers and their immediate family
2374 on property they own during the regular bear season without going through the lottery. '17

2375 **Coyote**

2376 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

2377 **Feral Hogs**

2378 Feral hogs should be regulated as a "varmint" species. '15

2379 **Deer**

2380 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of
2381 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '17

2382 We urge DNR to lower the ratio of deer per square mile. '18

2383 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
2384 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
2385 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '17

- 2386 (1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '17
- 2387 (2) List Sika deer as nuisance species due to extreme crop damage. '17
- 2388 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
2389 seasons. '17
- 2390 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd
2391 population count. '17
- 2392 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
2393 areas. '17
- 2394 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
2395 herd. '17
- 2396 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '17
- 2397 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent
2398 to agricultural lands. '17
- 2399 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and
2400 processing harvested deer. '17
- 2401 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
2402 management. '17
- 2403 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
2404 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of
2405 deer population. '17

2406 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '17

2407 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
2408 tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17

2409 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a
2410 plan to manage and control wildlife populations. '17

2411 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an
2412 increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17

2413 **Deer Crop Damage**

2414 Any refusal or increase in RMA (Risk Management Agency) premiums, specifically due to
2415 deer crop damage should enable farmers to use increased methods of deer harvesting,
2416 including the night use of DMP's (Deer Management Permits). '22

- 2417 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate
2418 enactment:
- 2419 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17
 - 2420 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17
 - 2421 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop
2422 within the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17
 - 2423 (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17
 - 2424 (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17
 - 2425 (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
2426 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
 - 2427 (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
2428 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
2429 disposing properly should be eliminated. '17
 - 2430 (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to always use the weapon of
2431 choice for filling Deer Management permits. '17
 - 2432 (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
 - 2433 (10) Implementation of a program to allow certified processors to be able to sell
2434 venison that is harvested on a Deer Management Permit. '24
 - 2435 (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
 - 2436 (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the
2437 authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated
2438 as such. '17
 - 2439 (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be
2440 deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17
 - 2441 (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation
2442 non-profit under a crop damage permit. '17
 - 2443 (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to help deter crop
2444 damage. '21

2445
2446 **Fox Chasing**

2447 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from
2448 landowners to conduct the hunt. '08

2449 **Furbearers**

2450 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

2451 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase
2452 a stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any
2453 fee. '08

2454 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

2455 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
2456 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture
2457 of fur-bearing wildlife. '10

2458 We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

2459 We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species like groundhogs if they
2460 are causing property damage. '17

2461 **Hunting Ethics and Liability**

2462 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
2463 taking place. '07

2464 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
2465 manner like motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record after
2466 an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

2467 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
2468 the maximum extent possible. '06

2469 Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by
2470 hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting
2471 activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in
2472 safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established
2473 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

2474 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

2475 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
2476 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
2477 regulations. '17

2478 We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the
2479 purpose of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18

2480 On privately owned land, we support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the
2481 state. '23

2482 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
2483 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
2484 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
2485 during that season. '17

2486 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17

2487 We support extending the deer firearms hunting season through February. '21

2488 We support a longer firearm season on privately owned lands that overlaps the
2489 primitive weapon seasons that will maximize existing bag limits. '21

2490 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17

2491 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17

2492 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17

2493 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
2494 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren, and employees when hunting only on that
2495 property. We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and
2496 his/her spouse, children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural
2497 purposes (or a sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this
2498 farmland. We are opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license
2499 exemption to persons (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under
2500 the age of 16. '17

2501 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
2502 hunting or trapping privileges. '17

2503 We support funding for deer processing and donations programs from state General
2504 Funds or additional hunting license fees '23

2505 **Waterfowl**

2506 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2507 Service to take all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow goose
2508 population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

2509 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
2510 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

2511 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
2512 throughout, starting about November 5th.'09
2513 We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on
2514 or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level
2515 consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14
2516 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
2517 increase in bag limits. '08
2518 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09
2519 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:
2520 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08
2521 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09
2522 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of
2523 property lines. '08
2524 We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows
2525 or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area to be charged with baiting. '14

Waterfowl Crop Damage

2527 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08
2528 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e., recorders or baiters) to
2529 reduce the snow goose population. '08

2530

YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS

2531 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland
2532 through:
2533 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '20
2534 (2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '20
2535 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation
2536 easements; '20
2537 (4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07
2538 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them; '20
2539 (6) Support and greater promotion of programs. '20
2540 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture
2541 to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '20
2542