



Welcome back to **The Final Hotline** of 2024! If you want to get more news year-round from **Maryland Farm Bureau**, [sign up here](#) for our weekly communications newsletter. We're here to help ***strengthen and grow agriculture in Maryland!***

WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON

Welcome to the final Hotline of the 2024 legislative session! Session was busy again this year, with over 2,700 bills being introduced – of those, **MDFB followed 140.**

This Hotline will break down the **46 bills that MDFB testified on** in either the House, the Senate, or both. The bills are separated by the bills that passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature and the bills that didn't pass this year.

MDFB **opposed 13 bills** and were able to **kill 12 of those bills**. Of the **18 bills MDFB supported, 10 passed.**

Thank you to our grassroots! Between our two **Action Alerts**, opposing the **cage-free egg mandate** and supporting **deer management programs**, our members have made over **600 contacts with legislators!** Thanks to your efforts, we got the results we wanted on both bills. It couldn't have been done without your support – thank you!

Going to miss us? Don't worry! We have a **weekly communications newsletter** to keep you updated with everything going on at **Maryland Farm Bureau**. You don't want to miss this – [sign up here!](#)

MDFB VICTORIES

SB0367/HB0481: **Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs - Authorization**
Senator Mautz and Delegates Hutchinson, Adams, Anderton, Hartman, Otto, and Sample-Hughes
SB0367 and HB0481 passed both the House and Senate during this session. It is currently on its way to the Governor's desk to be signed into law. This bill would authorize and protect programs like the Lower Shore Doe Harvest Challenge. These programs have been under more scrutiny the past few years, and needed a legislative fix to continue. This bill was brought up twice in prior sessions but never passed – This year, we issued an action

alert that resulted in over 150 messages sent to legislators that got this bill over the finish line.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

HB1190: Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions

Delegate Ruth

Maryland Farm Bureau strongly opposed HB1190. Every session, bills come up that take tools out of the toolbox for farmers. This bill would prohibit the selling of a pesticide that has PFAS chemicals as an active ingredient. We do not support regulations concerning PFAS without conclusive scientific data. This bill died in committee with no cross-file.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

SB0193/ HB0357: Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions

Delegates Terrasa, Lehman, Allen, Bagnall, Cardin, Embry, Fair, Feldmark, Foley, Holmes, J. Long, McCaskill, Palakovich Carr, Patterson, Pena-Melnyk, Rosenberg, Ruth, Solomon, Stein, Stewart, Wells, Wilkins, and Wu and Senator Lewis Young

Maryland Farm Bureau strongly opposed this bill. This bill negatively impacts our shell egg producers and places pressure on them to convert to a cage-free system. With the strenuous standards in this bill, it is considered a threat to the viability of egg layer operations in Maryland. The economic viability of going cage-free and the biosecurity concerns of HPAI will lead this bill to render more harm than good. This bill would put the few egg-laying farms that farm this way out of business. Bill died in committee in both the House and the Senate after MDFB members sent over 400 messages to legislators in opposition.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

BILLS THAT PASSED

SB808/HB1466: Anaerobic Digestion Technology - Coordination and Guidance *Senators Carozza, Gallion, and Hester and Delegate Jacobs*

Maryland Farm Bureau supported SB808 and HB1466. The bill will help guide farmers through the implementation of this technology in partnership with the Maryland Department of Agriculture. This bill made it out of the Senate but did not make it out of the House during this session. The Senate version was successfully passed on Sine die!

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

HB1101/SB0653: Standing - Environmental and Natural Resources Protection Proceedings (Clean Water Justice Act of 2024)

Delegates Love, Charkoudian, Foley, Fraser-Hidalgo, J. Long, Ruth, and Stewart,

Senators Augustine, Elfreth, Smith, and M. Washington

Maryland Farm Bureau opposed HB1101 and SB0653. This bill would pose farmers at risk of lawsuits. We continue to advocate for farmer's protection under the law. No farmer in compliance should be at risk of a lawsuit. The bill was amended to focus standing on MDE permits. MDFB was able to work to get amendments proposed that would exempt MDE General Permits (CAFO) from the bill. Those amendments were ultimately not accepted. This bill crossed over in both the House and Senate. The bill passed the House and Senate.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

HB0979/SB0915: Agriculture - Invasive Plant Species - Regulation (Biodiversity and Agriculture Protection Act)

Delegate Foley, Guyton, Ruth, and Stein and Senator Brooks

Maryland Farm Bureau monitored HB0979 and SB0915 and changed our position to support with amendment after review and amendments from the sponsor. This bill has sufficient wording that matches our policy and ensures the best management of invasive plant species. This bill will help with problem species such as the Tree of Heaven and Palmer Amaranth, while not handcuffing the nursery industry that has an out of state market for these species. The bill has been voted out of the House and Senate and is off to the governor for final approval.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support with Amendment

**HB0991/SB1074: Agriculture - Food Processing Residuals Utilization Permit - Establishment
Originally named: Environment - Industrial Sludge Utilization Permit - Establishment**

Delegates Love, Bouchat, Miller, Rose, Tomlinson, Boyce, Lehman, Ruth, and Terrasa Senators Ready, Elfreth, West, and Lewis Young

Maryland Farm Bureau monitored HB0991 and SB1074 for possible amendments to its language. We look to limit the restrictions posed on farmers concerning the use of biosolids on farmland. MDFB worked closely with the Maryland Grain Producers and Delmarva Chicken Association to offer amendments to this bill that helped deal with those improperly using DAF in our state, but not causing concern to those that have been properly using the soil amendment. The bill was passed in both the House and the Senate.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support with Amendments

HB1165/SB0969: Stream and Watershed Restoration - Stream Restoration Contractor Licensing and Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration and Funding (Whole Watershed Act)

Delegates Love, Ivey, and Stein, Senators Elfreth, Hester, and Guzzone

Maryland Farm Bureau monitored HB1165 / SB969 with no position. Stream and Watershed Restoration is an important piece to the health of the Bay. This bill will take a targeted approach to improving Bay health through a cost share program focusing on vital areas within the watershed. Final decision was to take no position but it is worth noting this bill

passed the
House and Senate.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: No position

SB0589/HB0812: Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission - Funding

*Senators Bailey, Jackson, Benson, Elfreth, Ellis, and Rosapepe
Delegates J. Long, Davis, Harris, T. Morgan, and Wilson*

Maryland Farm Bureau supported SB0589 and HB0812. This would increase the funding from \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 with an included funding source from the Cigarette Restitution Fund. Funding is an important element of Maryland Agriculture that needs to be promoted and preserved. This bill was successfully passed by both sides!

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

HB0447/SB0440: Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation

Delegates Ziegler, Allen and Ruth, Senators Elfreth, Bailey, Corderman, Hester, Jennings, Salling, Benson, Gile, Jackson, King, and Zucker

Maryland Farm Bureau supported HB0447 and SB0440 for their positive contributions to wildlife management. This bill would allow certain individuals to claim an increased credit against the state income tax if an antlerless deer is harvested and donated to certain charitable organizations. This bill can alleviate some of the taxes incurred on family farms and encourage donations of deer meat to charitable venison. This bill successfully passed both sides!

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

HB0113/SB0042: Vehicle Laws - Horse Riding - Helmet Requirement for

Minors *Delegates Lehman, Boyce, Foley, Guyton, Hill, T. Morgan, and
Pena-Melnyk Senator Kelly*

Maryland Farm Bureau supported HB0113 and SB0042. This bill requires adults to ensure certain minors riding any equine species to wear a helmet. The bill mainly pertains to public land and uses the standards of the American Society of Testing and Materials for protective headgear. This bill successfully passed both the House and Senate!

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

SB0196: Soil Conservation Districts - Small Ponds - Plan Review Fees

Senators Gallion, Brooks, Hester, and Lewis Young and Delegate Wims

Maryland Farm Bureau supported bill SB0196 to support our local conservation districts. Soil health is important to all farmers and reviewing plans for small ponds will ensure the

system's efficiency to provide reliable information to the farmer. Funds collected under the Act could help support the budget and provide potential pathways for more financial support to the agricultural community. The fees in this bill are not the responsibility of the farmer, but the responsibility of the group that constructed the pond. The bill successfully passed both the House and Senate!

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

SB290: Certified Local Farm and Fish Program - Annual Waiver Reports – Alterations *Chair Senator Feldman*

Maryland Farm Bureau supported SB290. This bill looks to streamline the waiver process for state agencies and universities and make it more efficient by streamlining the reporting deadlines for the Certified Local Farm and Fish Program. This bill was sent to the Governor's desk to be signed!

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

SB0178/HB0022: Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration

Delegates Ruth, Ebersole, Foley, Guyton, Hill, Lehman, McComas, Palakovich Carr, Pasteur, Pena Melnyk, Solomon, Taylor, Terrasa, Wu, and Ziegler, and Senator Klausmeier

Maryland Farm Bureau supported SB0178 and HB0022 with pending amendments from the bill sponsor that ensure farmers can continue management practices on invasive and noxious weeds. This bill requires the State Highway Administration's pollinator habitat plan to include policies and procedures regarding the use of pollinator habitat areas along State highways. Ensuring the proper management of invasive and noxious weeds is an agricultural priority in this bill. We do not want farmers in Maryland to lose the ability to manage their land with sound agricultural practices. This bill was amended to support our policy and was successfully voted in!

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support with Amendments

UNSUCCESSFUL BILLS

SB0235/HB0057: Prescription Drug Monitoring Program - Dispensers – Veterinarians *Chair Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk and Chair Senator Pamela Beidle*

Maryland Farm Bureau opposed SB0235 due to its concern that it would put extra monitoring steps on veterinarians. These extra steps would make it more difficult for rural practitioners to comply with the mandate. This bill would have an impact on the sustainability of rural veterinary practices—currently, the majority of the states exempt veterinarians from this monitoring program. Rural practitioners who cannot keep up with these mandates have a higher likelihood of being driven out of the industry furthering the shortage of veterinary care. This bill died in both the House and the Senate.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

HB0150: Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program and Diesel Vehicle Emissions Control Program - Fees and Fines

Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo

Maryland Farm Bureau opposed HB0150 for the potential impacts it may have on our members. This bill would have created increased inspection fees on both gas and diesel vehicles in our state. This bill died in committee.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

HB0082: Post College and Career Readiness Pathways - Cost to Student – Alteration *Delegates Wu and T. Morgan*

Maryland Farm Bureau does not support HB0082. This bill removes the requirement that college and career readiness programs be offered at no cost. Therefore boards of education may provide these programs at a fee that not all students can afford. Students should not have to pay money to participate in a program that could potentially recruit them to agriculture and more importantly set them up for success. This bill died in the House.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

SB0392/HB0616: Agricultural Land - Adversarial Foreign Governments - Restrictions on Property Interests

Senator Gallion and Delegates Munoz and Miller

Maryland Farm Bureau supported SB0392 and HB0616. We encourage the utilization of productive farmland to be used by our Maryland Farm families. This bill would prohibit adversarial foreign governments from taking up our already limited supply of land in the state. The amendments accepted by the Sponsor would have protected agricultural support companies performing research in the state. The bill died in committee in both the House and the Senate.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support with Amendments

HB0210: Maryland Building Performance Standards – Fossil Fuel Use and Electric-Ready Standards

Delegate Acevero

Maryland Farm Bureau opposed HB0210. HB0210 jeopardizes farm viability in Maryland. It looks to require all new buildings to be electric ready which is not economically feasible for our farmers. Maryland's infrastructure is not equipped to handle electric-ready buildings across the state. This bill does not consider Maryland agriculture in its desired objectives.

The bill died in committee with no cross-file.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

**HB1042/SB0932: Maryland Agricultural BMP Best in Show Program -
Established Delegate Guzzone**

Senators Elfreth, Gallion, Gile, Hester, and Jackson

This bill would establish the Maryland Agriculture Best Management Practice Best in Show program. This program would provide and prioritize the use of certain funding to agricultural best management practices. Of this bill, 200 million will be transferred from the Bay restoration fund and up to three million will be transferred from the Chesapeake Atlantic Coastal Bays trust fund. This program would be housed in the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Maryland Farm Bureau did not take a position on HB1042 and SB0932. The bill died in both House and Senate committees.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: No Position

HB1025/SB0841: Transportation - Motor Fuel Tax Rates, Vehicle-Miles-Traveled Tax, and Farebox Recovery Requirement (Transportation Equity, Fairness, and Privacy Act of 2024)

Delegates M. Morgan, Mangione, Adams, Arentz, Baker, Buckel, Chisholm, Ciliberti, Fisher, Ghrist, Griffith, Hartman, Hinebaugh, Hornberger, Hutchinson, Jacobs, Kipke, R. Long, McComas, Metzgar, Miller, T. Morgan, Munoz, Nawrocki, Otto, Pippy, Reilly, Rose, Schmidt, Stonko, Szeliga, and Valentine and Senators Ready, Bailey, Carozza, Corderman, Folden, Gallion, Hershey, Jennings, Mautz, McKay, Salling, Simonaire, and West

Maryland Farm Bureau supported HB1025 and SB0841. We support prohibiting state or local jurisdictions from adding on extra fees related to our farmer's vehicles. This bill would repeal a requirement that certain motor fuel tax rates be adjusted in future years based on growth in the Consumer Price Index, and prohibit the State or a local jurisdiction from imposing or levying a vehicle-miles-traveled tax or certain other similar fees, tolls, or taxes. Bill died in committee's for both the House and Senate.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

SB0056/HB0163: Food Waste and Solid Waste Reduction – Grants, Fund, and Surcharge *Senator Hester and Delegate Charkoudian*

Maryland Farm Bureau supported SB0056 in its efforts to provide funding for On-Farm Organic Diversion and Composting. Managing waste is important to farmers and supporting the implementation of on-farm composting is beneficial to the farmer and surrounding environment. This bill was withdrawn by the house sponsor and died in the Senate committee.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

HB1421/SB0911: Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics - Gene Structure- and Function-Modifying Products - Labeling

Delegates S. Johnson and A. Johnson and Senator McKay

Maryland Farm Bureau opposed HB1421 and SB0911. This prohibits and restricts the marketing and labeling of GMO commodities grown in the state, and included several vaccines currently in the experimental phases to deal with HPAI and African Swine Fever. We strongly oppose state-mandated labeling of these products and believe only the federal government policy should be utilized on this issue. This bill received a later hearing which decreased its chances of moving during the 2024 session. It died in committee but could pose a growing threat in future sessions to come.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

HB1328/SB1082: Solar Energy and Energy Storage - Development and State Procurement *Senator Hester, Delegates Ziegler and Crosby*

Maryland Farm Bureau supported with amendments HB1328 and SB1082. We support further research of agrivoltaic systems and this bill takes steps toward ensuring the land is still productive with the use of cover crops and a vegetation management plan. However, we look to amend certain language to ensure this is not a permanent fix or band-aid solution to the loss of farmland through solar. This bill did not make it out of either committee.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support with Amendment

HB1284: Wetlands and Waterways Program - Stream Restoration Projects *Delegates Terrasa, Lehman, and Ruth*

Maryland Farm Bureau opposes HB1284. We oppose this bill due to restricting and possibly denying exemptions to farmers. This bill will be adding more hurdles to receive approval from the Department of Environment which goes against our policy. This bill died in committee.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

HB1515: Sales and Use Tax - Rate Reduction and Services *Delegate Moon*

Maryland Farm Bureau looks to monitor HB1515 in its attempts to alter the rate of certain sales and use taxes. This bill would create a 5% tax on professional services farmers use to meet the standards set by our state. We look to ensure this wouldn't jeopardize the financial stability of farmers concerning their taxes on agricultural-related services. This bill made it out of Rules, but died in Committee.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

SB0869/HB640: Property Tax - Improvements on Agricultural Land - Assessment

Senators Guzzone, Elfreth, Hester and Jennings and Delegates Ziegler, Watson, Baker, Boyce, Guyton, T. Morgan, and Wu

MDFB was involved in a workgroup this offseason that sat down with SDAT to try and find a solution to the massive changes in agriculture support structure assessments. Out of the workgroup has come HB0640 / SB0869, which MDFB opposed due to the bill's agricultural tiering structure. This bill was withdrawn in the Senate and the House.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

HB0245: Department of the Environment - Fees, Penalties, Funding, and Regulation

Chair Delegate Korman

Maryland Farm Bureau will monitor the state of bill HB0245. This bill will be monitored to determine its impacts on agriculture and what possible impacts it may pose to farmers. The position was said to possibly change but the final decision was to oppose the bill. This bill did not go anywhere during this year's session.

Maryland Farm Bureau: Oppose

SB0278/HB0234: Department of Agriculture - Licensing, Registration, Fees and Penalties, and Regulation

Chair Delegate Korman and Chair Senator Feldman

Maryland Farm Bureau supported this bill with amendments. This bill would have changed certain fees for weights and measures, nutrient management, beekeeping hive registration, and equine establishment licensing. We support the amendment to extend the implementation date of this bill from 2024 to 2026. Allowing farmers more time to adapt to the new changes presented in this bill. The bill passed through committee in the House, but not in the Senate.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support with Amendments

SB1035: Focusing Federal Career and Technical Education Act Funds on Blueprint School to-Work Apprenticeship Goals Act

Senator Rosapepe

Maryland Farm Bureau supported SB1035. This bill promotes alternative education outlets through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Providing career opportunities is important to ensuring the next generation is equipped to handle their future professions. This bill successfully crossed over out of the Senate and has no cross-file. It did not make it to a final voting session.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

HB1318: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

Delegates Boyce, Addison, Healey, Lehman, Love, Ruth, Stein, Stewart, and Terrasa

Maryland Farm Bureau supported HB1318 in its efforts to provide grants for On-Farm Organic Diversion and Composting. Managing waste is important to farmers and supporting the implementation of on-farm composting is beneficial to the farmer and surrounding environment. This bill made it out of the House with no cross-file but did not make it anywhere during this year's session.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support

HB0024/SB0096: Environment - Impact of Environmental Permits and State Agency

Actions *Delegates Boyce, Addison, Allen, Foley, Healey, Lehman, J. Long, Love, and Stein, and Senator Jackson*

Maryland Farm Bureau supported HB0024 and SB0096 with amendments. Maryland Farm Bureau will advocate for an amendment that protects the CAFOs in our state from being included in this bill. Working with our legislators we were able to get the CAFO wording removed from the bill which allowed us to change our stance to support with amendment. This bill made it out of the House but died in the Senate committee.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support with Amendment

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

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