





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

## WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON

***MDFB Testifies in Opposition to SB0193:*** We were represented by our **Director of Government Affairs Tyler Hough** and **1st Vice President Jonathan Quinn** to testify in **opposition to SB0193** which would ban Maryland farmers from having caged egg operations. [Click here](#) to watch their testimony.

 **Action Alert** : We're fighting this bill in Annapolis, but ***we need your help too***. Easily **write your elected officials** with just one click, [here](#)!

***Don't forget:*** Today is the **LAST DAY** to [register](#) for our **Day in Annapolis** on **February 7th**. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to discuss policy with your fellow farmers and speak with your representatives directly.

## WHAT WE'RE MONITORING

***SB 0178/HB 0022:*** Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration

*Sponsored by Senator Klausmeier | Senate Hearing: 1/31/24 at 1:00 PM | House Hearing: 2/7/24 at 2:30 PM*

Requiring the State Highway Administration's pollinator habitat plan to include policies and procedures regarding the use of pollinator habitat areas along State highways; requiring the Administration to track and evaluate federal programs that provide funding for pollinator habitats, native plants, and invasive species control and to apply for any funding to pollinator habitats

**Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Monitor**

We look to monitor SB0178 and HB0022. This bill in theory has the potential for positive

impacts but it is worth monitoring for any potential requirements on pesticides for farmers located around these habitats. This bill may change throughout session pending on amendments.

**HB 0082: Post College and Career Readiness Pathways - Cost to Student –**

**Alteration** *Sponsored by Delegates Wu & Morgan | House Hearing: 1/31/24 at 1:00 PM*

Repealing a requirement that a county board of education provide certain post-college and career readiness pathways at no cost to students who meet the college and career readiness standard.

**Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Monitor**

We are monitoring HB0082. This bill removes the requirement that college and career readiness programs be offered at no cost. There is a possibility that boards of education may provide these programs at a fee that not all students can afford, which might include agriculture programs. We will continue to monitor in the case of agricultural programs will being affected by this bill.

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

*Sponsored by Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo | House Hearing: 2/1/24 at 1:00 PM*

Establishing a recurring fee on each motor vehicle registered in the State that is granted a waiver from, exempted from, or not subject to the Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program and on certain diesel vehicles; requiring the fee to be deposited in the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund and used to provide incentives to expand electric vehicle ownership and to expand electric vehicle infrastructure;

**Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Monitor**

We are monitoring HB0150 for any potential impacts it may have on our members. Position on this bill may change, corresponding with amendments.

**HB 0245: Department of the Environment - Fees, Penalties, Funding, and**

**Regulation** *Sponsored by Delegate Korman | House Hearing: 1/31/24 at 2:30 PM*

Authorizing the Department of the Environment (MDE) to charge a fee for processing and issuing on-site sewage disposal permits and individual well construction permits under certain circumstances; authorizing MDE to establish a certain fee for the Responsible Personnel Training Program Certification; requiring a holder of a license to transfer oil into the State to pay a certain fee when oil owned by the licensee is first transferred into the State; establishing the Private Dam Repair Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; etc.

**Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Monitor**

We 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. Position may change.

**HB 0109/SB 0281: Natural Resources - Submerged Aquatic Vegetation - Alteration or Removal Requirements**

*Sponsored by Delegate Korman | House Hearing: 1/31/24 at 2:30 PM*

Authorizing certain persons to alter certain submerged aquatic vegetation in a certain manner and in accordance with certain requirements; authorizing a public utility company or telecommunications carrier to alter certain submerged aquatic vegetation in a certain manner and in accordance with certain requirements; and altering certain requirements related to the alteration or removal of certain submerged aquatic vegetation.

**Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose**

We oppose HB0109 and SB0281 for its negative impacts on the aquaculture industry. This bill puts further restrictions and infringes on shellfish leases when it comes to managing their submerged aquatic vegetation. Working with our allies in aquaculture we will continue to seek amendments that would make this bill acceptable, but for now we remain in strong opposition.

**HB 0113/SB 0042: Vehicle Laws - Horse Riding - Helmet Requirement for Minors** *Sponsored by Delegates Lehman, Boyce, Foley, Guyton, Hill, T. Morgan, Pena-Melnyk, Ruth, and Terrasa | House Hearing: 2/01/24 at 1:00 PM*

Prohibiting an adult from allowing certain minors to ride a horse, donkey, mule, or pony on a highway, a public horse-riding path, or the grounds of a facility for which the primary purpose is recreational, educational, or competitive equestrian activities unless the minor is wearing a properly secured helmet that meets or exceeds the standards of the American Society of Testing and Materials for protective headgear used in equestrian riding.

**Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Support**

We support 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.

## WHAT THEY'RE WORKING ON

**Governor Moore delivers 16-bill legislative package:** "The governor's legislation falls into four areas — **public safety, affordability, making the state more competitive, and public service** — that were highlighted in his recent budget announcement." - Bryan Sears of [Maryland Matters](#).

**Emerging Technologies:** From [WFMD](#): "Maryland General Assembly Could Be Dealing With **Artificial Intelligence** During The Current Session." Within our own sector, the **American Farm Bureau** recently created [new policy](#) to address the growth of artificial intelligence in agriculture.

**People are talking:** Some legislators have begun discussing reforms to the practice of **political parties appointing vacancies** in the General Assembly. [More from Moco360.](#)

## WHAT WE'RE MESSAGING ON

Some of our advocacy efforts in Annapolis are intended to educate legislators about agriculture in our state. But did you know that we're not alone?

Here are **3 General Assembly members who work in agriculture**:

- **Senator Jason Gallion (R - District 35)** owns a beef cattle and hay farm in **Harford County**.
  - Sen. Gallion also serves as the Agricultural Specialist for Harford County Government and formerly served as a Board Member for the **Harford County Farm Bureau**.
- **Delegate Charles Otto (R - District 38A)** grows corn and soybeans on Maryland's lower shore.
  - Del. Otto is also a former employee of **Maryland Farm Bureau**! (How worlds collide!)
- **Delegate Natalie Ziegler (D - District 9A)** owns **Carroll Mill Farm**, a feed grain operation in **Ellicott City, Maryland**.
  - Del. Ziegler grows Rye on her farm ([Whiskey lovers](#) rejoice!)

Getting ag policy wins in Annapolis can be a tall task. Luckily, with members who have first-hand experience in agriculture, it can make that job a bit easier. If you [live in one of their districts](#), consider dropping them a note thanking them for their support of local agriculture!

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

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