



Welcome back to **The Hotline!** We're here to 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

A message from Director of Govt. Relations Tyler Hough: "Welcome to the **last weekly hotline of the 2024 session**. We have been busy this year with over **2500 bills introduced**, with Maryland Farm Bureau **following 140** of those bills. **Crossover is on March 18th**, and that is the deadline for all bills that are intended to pass to be sent to the opposite chamber for voting.

With crossover on the horizon, the **action has moved from the committees to the chamber floors**. Following **Sine Die on April 8th** we will be sending out the final hotline that covers all of the bills MDFB covered during session and the final status of the bill."

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 **550 contacts with legislators!** So far, your efforts have made a real difference – with the deer management bill passing in the Senate and neither version of the egg mandate making it out of their committee yet.

While we are not out of the woods with either of bills just yet, the progress we've made couldn't have been done without your help. If you haven't already, continue to **write your legislators** through our [Action Center](#) in case either bill makes it to the floor or out of committee.

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!

WHAT WE'RE MONITORING

HB1190: Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions

Delegate Ruth | House Hearing: 3/13/24 at 1:00 p.m.

Prohibiting, beginning June 1, 2025, a person from selling a pesticide that has PFAS chemicals listed as an active ingredient on the labeling accompanying the pesticide; and prohibiting, beginning December 31, 2025, a person from using a pesticide that has PFAS chemicals listed as an active ingredient on the labeling.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Oppose

Maryland Farm Bureau opposes 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.

MDFB Policy: *"No PFAS or chemical contaminant regulations should be promulgated at either the state or federal level without conclusive scientific data."*

HB0993: Commemorative Weeks - Maryland Climate Education Week

Delegate Stein | House Hearing: 3/14/24 at 1:00 p.m.

Requiring the Governor annually to proclaim the first week of April as Maryland Climate Education Week; and requiring the proclamation to urge residents of all ages to participate in educational activities that promote awareness of climate change and take action toward the State's climate commitments.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Monitor

Maryland Farm Bureau looks to monitor HB0993. We would like to ensure this bill includes agriculture in a positive light. Ensuring the narrative around climate change is not anti-farmer is important to educating the public on agriculture. We support curriculums that teach agricultural practices and urge the state to include ag education in environmental education.

MDFB Policy: *"MDFB recommends that environmental science curriculum be science-based and not disparage agriculture. Science curriculums should reflect modern agricultural practices including conservation practices, nutrient management, water quality enhancement, carbon sequestration and best use land practices. We urge the state to include ag education in current environmental curriculums."*

HB1515: Sales and Use Tax - Rate Reduction and Services

Delegate Moon | House Hearing: 3/11/24 at 11:00 a.m.

Altering the definitions of "taxable price" and "taxable service" for the purposes of certain provisions of law governing the sales and use tax to impose the tax on certain labors and services; altering the rate of the sales and use tax; altering the percentage of gross receipts from vending machine sales and from certain sales of dyed diesel fuel to which the sales and use tax is applied; altering the rate of the sales and use tax applied to certain charges made in connection with sales of alcoholic beverages; etc.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Position: Monitor

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.

MDFB Policy: *"Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and related services from the state sales tax. '22 To clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases, we recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt card."*

WHAT THEY'RE WORKING ON

Vertical farming in Maryland: Governor Wes Moore was joined by celebrity chef Jose Andres to tour Bowery Farming in Nottingham, a large vertical farming company; more from [WBAL](#).

Budget challenges: The Board of Revenue Estimates [are expecting](#) hundreds of millions of dollars less than previously anticipated by the next fiscal year – **\$255 million less** than the most recent estimates.

Fall-out from the Legislature: House Appropriations Chairman Ben Barnes [reacts to](#) Board of Revenue Estimates revision: *"Essentially what this \$250 million write-down means is that this budget is out of balance."*

WHAT WE'RE MESSAGING ON

With a bill being introduced about **Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)**, sometimes known as **"forever chemicals,"** it's important to know what this substance is and how it could affect agriculture.

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals used in making of many consumer products, like **teflon** and **goretex**, by companies like **DuPont** and **3M**

Studies show that these compounds do not breakdown and are persistent in the environment, **potentially contaminating our water.**

Studies also show that **exposure to PFAS** chemicals could lead to significant health concerns

The [CDC says](#) that **nearly every American, 97%,** has some level of **PFAS** in their blood.

Farmers and agriculture do not produce PFAS, however, **PFAS** might be found in water provided to **livestock and crops.**

Through no fault of our own, farmers are being punished in [some states](#) for **PFAS** being found in their products, even though we have **never been producers of the chemical** **Both American Farm Bureau and MDFB have new policy regarding PFAS** in order to protect farmers from unfair condemnation.

MDFB's policy: *"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."*

Legislators would be better to focus on makers of PFAS instead of farmers who are the

victims of this contamination.

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

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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

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