

Hotline #4

Bills We're Following

HB340: Climate Change – Attorney General Actions, Climate Change Restitution Fund, and Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council

Delegate Ruth | House Hearing: Health & Government Operations 2/11/2025 at 1 p.m.

Authorizing the Attorney General to investigate, commence, and prosecute or defend any suit or action that holds certain entities accountable for tortious or otherwise unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change; establishing the Climate Change Restitution Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; establishing the Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council to provide information to the Governor, the Attorney General, and the General Assembly on climate change and the distribution of the Fund; etc.

MDFB Position: Monitor

HB362/SB290: Natural Resources – Roadside Tree Removal Permit Notification Act

Delegates Wolek/ Senator Love | House Hearing: E&T 2/12/2025 at 1 p.m. / Senate Hearing: 2/11/2025 at 1p.m.

Requiring an applicant for a roadside tree removal permit to provide notice of the application to all owners of property abutting and adjacent to the property subject to the application and the governing body of any common ownership community that has control over the land on which the tree subject to the application is located by certified mail, return receipt requested.

MDFB Position: Monitor

This bill modifies the permit process to get a roadside tree removal permit to require the applicant to provide notice of the application to all owners of property abutting. MDFB will monitor the bill to see what effects it may have on tree maintenance concerning to the movement of equipment.

HB386/SB345: Pesticides – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions

Delegate Love / Senator Brooks | House Hearing: Health & Government Operations 2/12/2025 at 1 p.m.

Requiring, by January 1, 2026, the Department of Agriculture to develop and maintain a list of certain registered pesticides that list PFAS chemicals as an active ingredient on the labeling accompanying the pesticide; prohibiting, beginning June 1, 2026, a person from using, for certain purposes, PFAS pesticides listed by the Department; prohibiting, beginning June 1, 2028, a person from using PFAS pesticides in the State; etc.

MDFB Position: Oppose

As anticipated, the PFAS in pesticides ban returns this session. This bill would require MDA, by January 2026, to develop and maintain a list of certain registered pesticides that list PFAS chemicals as an active ingredient on the labeling accompanying the pesticide. Beginning June 1, 2026, these pesticides cannot be used at a health care facility, school, day care operation, by residential lawn care, or for mosquito spraying. Beginning June 1, 2027, MDA can no longer register any of these pesticides for sale, and on June 1, 2028, no one may use a PFAS containing pesticide in the state.

HB471: Agricultural Land and Programs – Scrutinized Entities

Delegate Chisholm | House Hearing: E&T 2/12/2025 1 p.m.

Prohibiting a nonresident alien who is a citizen of a country subject to an embargo under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, a commercial enterprise or business incorporated in a country subject to an embargo under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, and an individual employed by or associated with the government of a country subject to an embargo under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations from purchasing agricultural land or participating in certain agricultural programs.

MDFB Position: Support

This bill is another iteration at attempting to control foreign government ownership of agriculture land in the State. MDFB has policy that supports limiting foreign government ownership of agriculture land.

HB559/SB544: Food Establishment – Portable Chemical Toilets

*Delegate T. Morgan/Senator Bailey |House Hearing: Economic Matters
2/12/2025 at 1 p.m.*

Authorizing food establishments that are businesses that conduct agritourism, Class 4 limited wineries, or Class 8 farm breweries to comply with the requirement to provide a convenient lavatory by providing a portable chemical toilet that is supplied with approved hand drying devices, kept in a sanitary condition, and properly ventilated.

MDFB Position: Support

This bill will help with on-farm breweries and wineries compliance requirements to provide a convenient lavatory for guests.

HB650/SB563: Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund – Establishment (Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Act)

Delegates Pippy/Senator Hester | House Hearing: E&T 2/12/2025 at 1 p.m.

Establishing the Maryland Fair and Agricultural Education Promise Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund to advance agricultural fairs and education in the State; requiring interest earnings of the Fund to be credited to the Fund; requiring a \$1,450,000 of proceeds from the State lottery, before being allocated to the General Fund, to be allocated to the Fund; and repealing the requirement that a certain amount of annual proceeds from the State horse racing special fund be used to promote State agricultural fairs and education.

MDFB Position: Support

This bill aims to help find a solution for the shortfall of the unclaimed racing mutuals under the current special fund that covers the MAFB, MDSF, MAEF and others. This bill would pull out the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board (MAFB), Maryland State Fair (MDSF), and Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation (MAEF) from the current special fund and fund them under the education portion of the Maryland State Lottery. Not only would this help provide a more stable funding source for those programs/organizations, but it would also free up money in the current special fund to be distributed to others getting shorted on current funding from the special fund.

HB701: Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers – Purchase, Use, and Sale – Prohibitions (Clean Air Quiet Communities Act)

Delegate Foley | House Hearing: Economic Matters 2/11/2025 at 1 p.m.

Prohibiting the State from purchasing gasoline-powered leaf blowers beginning July 1, 2025; establishing a certain process to phase out on or

before a certain date the use by the State of gasoline-powered leaf blowers; requiring a person that sells or offers for sale a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State to provide certain notice to the purchaser or potential purchaser; prohibiting the sale of gasoline-powered leaf blowers beginning on January 1, 2027; etc.

MDFB Position: Oppose

This bill has the potential to set a precedent for the state to require all two-stroke engines be electric and potentially reach further down the line. It has been a few years since the bill was introduced. MDFB has policy directly opposing this bill.

HB842: Consumer Protection – Right to Repair – Farm Equipment

Delegate Hornberger | House Hearing: Economic Matters 2/11/2025 at 1 p.m.

Requiring a farm equipment manufacturer to make available certain documentation, updates, or information to an independent repair provider or owner of farm equipment to allow for the diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of the farm equipment; prohibiting a farm equipment manufacturer from knowingly misrepresenting or withholding farm equipment part numbers from a customer for a certain purpose; etc.

MDFB Position: Monitor

Currently the American Farm Bureau Federation has MOUs with the major agriculture equipment manufactures. Those MOUs state that the equipment manufactures will make available all needed resources for the customer to work on their equipment. The MOUs have been successful and make it unneeded for the need for legislation on the matter.

SB10/HB220: Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025)

Senator Ferguson/Delegate Stewart |Senate Hearing: EEE 2/13/2025 at 1 p.m.

Altering the definition of "Tier 1 renewable source" for purposes of excluding energy derived from waste and refuse from being eligible for inclusion in the renewable energy portfolio standard; and applying the Act to all renewable energy portfolio standard compliance years starting on or after January 1, 2025.

MDFB Position: Monitor

This bill returns this year in the same posture as last year. Last year was the first year we saw the bill focus directly on trash burning and not include woody-biomass and other tier 1 renewable sources. MDFB will monitor to make sure that the bill does not head away from only removing trash burning.

SB34/HB640: Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - Overhead Transmission Lines - Conservation Easements

Senator Brooks/Delegate Guyton |Senate Hearing: EEE 2/13/2025 at 1 p.m. / House Hearing: Economic Matters 2/20/2025 at 1 p.m.

Requiring the Public Service Commission to consider the impact of the development of overhead transmission lines on certain properties subject to an existing conservation easement in certain proceedings for a certificate of public convenience and necessity; and requiring the Commission to require an applicant for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the development of overhead transmission lines to consider alternative routes for transmission lines affecting conservation easements or alter proposed routes.

MDFB Position: Support

This bill would require the PSC to consider alternative routes for transmission lines that would avoid conservation easements, and the impact that transmission lines would have on properties in a conservation easement.

SB116/HB270: Data Center Impact Analysis and Report

Senator Lewis Young/Delegate Crosby | Senate Hearing: EEE 2/13/2025 at 1 p.m.

Requiring the Department of the Environment, the Maryland Energy Administration, and the University of Maryland School of Business, in coordination with the Department of Legislative Services, to conduct an analysis of the likely environmental, energy, and economic impacts of data center development in the State; and requiring the Department of Legislative Services to coordinate preparation of the final report to be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly by September 1, 2026.

MDFB Position: Monitor

SB134/HB42: Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs – Established

Senator Hester/Delegate | Senate Hearing: EEE 2/11/2025 at 1 p.m.

Establishing the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program in the Department of Agriculture to award grants to eligible entities to develop and implement on-farm organics recycling and compost use, wasted food prevention, and food rescue; establishing a solid waste disposal surcharge on the final disposal of solid waste in the State; requiring the Department to report to the General Assembly yearly beginning December 31, 2027, on the

grants awarded, and the impact on jobs creation, producers, and food waste reduction; etc.

MDFB Position: Support

MDFB supports SB134 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.

SB428/HB506: Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act

Senate President/House Speaker | Senate Hearing: EEE 2/11/2025 at 1 p.m.

Establishing the Maryland Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Program; establishing the Maryland Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Program Fund to support actions associated with fulfilling the Program's purpose; altering the definition of "healthy soils" for purposes of the Maryland Healthy Soils Program; exempting certain holders of certain fishing licenses from the requirement to obtain a food establishment license from the Maryland Department of Health; establishing the Water Quality Monitoring Program; etc.

MDFB Position: Support

This legislation will officially establish the Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Program. The program builds from current BMPs and will look to recognize and incentive farmers for being good stewards to the land. The regulations for this program and others in the bill will be completed if the bill passes.

SB657: Eminent Domain – Just Compensation – Fees and Costs

Senator Ready | Senate Hearing: Judicial Proceedings 2/11/2025 at 1 p.m.

Establishing that damages to be awarded for the taking of land in a condemnation proceeding include, in addition to the fair market value of the land taken, any legal, expert, or other fees or costs of the action incurred by a defendant.

MDFB Positions: Support

MDFB is supportive of potential legislation that increases the payments awarded due to the taking of land by eminent domain.

SB661/HB81: Real Property - Condemnation - Compensation for Farm and Agricultural Property (Protect Maryland Farm Lands Act)

*Senator Ready/Delegate Mangione | Senate Hearing: Judicial Proceedings
2/11/2025 at 1 p.m.*

Requiring the fair market value of certain agricultural property taken in a condemnation proceeding to be valued at 350% of the highest appraisal value of the property; and applying the Act retroactively to condemnation proceedings initiated on or after January 1, 2024.

MDFB Position: Support

MDFB is in support of HB81 as it increases the value that land holders would be paid when agriculture is taken by condemnation.