

## **Hotline #5**

### **Bills We're Following**

#### **HB18/SB121: Vehicle Laws – Noise Abatement Monitoring Systems Pilot Program – Inspection and Extension**

*Delegate Carr/Senator A. Washington | House Hearing: E&T 2/21/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Establishing that certain provisions of law relating to the inspection of recorded images apply to recorded images produced by a noise abatement monitoring system; and extending by 2 years the reporting and termination dates of the noise abatement monitoring systems pilot programs in Montgomery County and Prince George's County.

#### ***MDFB Position: Monitor***

MDFB will continue to monitor this bill to make sure that farm equipment moving on public roads is not included as a violator of the noise abatement monitoring systems.

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

*Delegate Stewart/Senator Ferguson | House Hearing: Economic Matters 2/20/2025 at 1:00 PM*

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.

#### **HB766: Wildlife Advisory Commission – Membership – Alterations**

*Delegate Otto | House Hearing: E&T 2/19/2025 at 1 PM*

Requiring that the Wildlife Advisory Commission member appointed to represent the farming community be selected from a list of candidates provided by the Maryland Farm Bureau.

***MDFB Position: Support***

DNR has a Wildlife Advisory Commission (WAC) that serves as an advisory board to the Secretary. In statute that Commission is to have (2) seats filled by members from the farming community. This bill would set in statute that the farmer representative seats are to be filled by candidates supplied by the Maryland Farm Bureau. This president is already set on other Commissions and Workgroups and would help the agriculture community have a stronger voice within DNR.

**HB829: Public Utilities – Transmission Lines – Advanced Transmission Technologies**

*Delegate Charkoudian | House Hearing: Economic Matters 2/20/2025 at 1 PM*

Altering the definition of "qualified generator lead line" for purposes of provisions of law regarding certificates of public convenience and necessity; requiring an applicant for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the construction of an overhead transmission line to include certain analyses; requiring the Public Service Commission to consider certain alternatives before taking final action on a certain application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity; etc.

***MDFB Position: Support***

This legislation would require applicants for a certificate of public convenience to include more information and analyses for the construction of overhead transmission lines.

**HB834/SB806: Agriculture – Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions**

*Delegate Terrasa/Senator Kramer | House Hearing: E&T 2/19/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Prohibiting a certain farm owner or operator from knowingly confining egg-laying hens in an enclosure that is not a cage-free housing system and does not meet certain space requirements, subject to certain exceptions, on and after January 1, 2030; and prohibiting a business owner or operator or a farm owner or operator from selling shell eggs or egg products without a certain certification of compliance on and after January 1, 2030.

***MDFB Position: Oppose***

This is another bill that we anticipated to return in 2025, and it returns in a slightly modified form. This year the main modification is the extension of the implementation date to January 1, 2030. The bill still would require that any layer operation over 3,000 birds convert

to an entirely cage-free housing system by the implementation date, and that all eggs sold in the state of Maryland are from cage-free housing systems.

**HB878: Department of the Environment - Water Resources - Protection of Vernal Pools (Vernal Pool Wetlands Protection Act of 2025)**

*Delegate Hill | House Hearing: 2/19/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Requiring the Department of the Environment to adopt regulations to protect and preserve vernal pools.

***MDFB Position: Monitor***

House Bill 878 requires the Maryland Department of the Environment to adopt regulations protecting vernal pools and their surrounding buffers. Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that provide critical habitat for amphibians, invertebrates, and other species. These ecosystems also contribute to groundwater replenishment and stormwater filtration.

**HB894/SB946: Endangered and Threatened Species - Incidental Taking – Bats**

*Delegate Jacobs/Senator Carozza | House Hearing: E&T 2/19/2025 at 1:00 PM/ Senate Hearing: EEE 3/4/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Authorizing the Secretary of Natural Resources to issue an incidental taking permit for the Indiana bat, the northern long-eared bat, and the tricolor bat if an applicant submits a certain conservation plan and the Secretary makes certain findings.

***MDFB Position: Support***

This bill which aims to add the Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) and other bat species to the list of species in Maryland authorized to have a “Habitat Protection Plan” (HCP) and incidental take permit issued by the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. The proposed legislation does not mandate the creation of an HCP but preserves the ability to establish one if necessary. This would provide a structured framework for reasonable conservation measures while allowing essential land management activities to continue.

**HB907: Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property – Alterations**

*Delegate Roberson | House Hearing: Ways & Means 2/18/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Altering eligibility for a tax credit against the county or municipal corporation property tax imposed on certain urban agricultural property; and requiring a county or municipal corporation that grants the tax credit to provide notice of the termination of the credit at least 1 year in advance and the opportunity to be heard to the public before the county or municipal corporation may exercise its authority to terminate the credit.

***MDFB Position: Support***

This legislation would allow for a tax credit for those utilizing Urban Agriculture Properties. These tax credits would allow for more security for those participating in urban agriculture and allow for growth of the urban agriculture sector.

**HB989/SB481: On-Farm Home Processing License - Revenue Limit – Prohibition**

*Delegate Jacobs/Senator Gallion | House Hearing: Health & Government Operations  
2/21/2025 at 1:00 PM/Senate Hearing: EEE 2/20/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Prohibiting the Maryland Department of Health from limiting the amount of revenue the holder of an on-farm home processing license may derive from food processed under the license.

***MDFB Position: Support***

This bill would remove the income cap for those utilizing an on-farm home processing license. This change in the cap would allow for value-added producers to expand their processing.

**HB998: Calvert County - Property Tax Credit - Tobacco Barns**

*Calvert County Delegation | House Hearing: Ways & Means 2/18/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Authorizing the governing body of Calvert County to grant a property tax credit against the county property tax imposed on certain real property that was formerly used solely as a tobacco barn.

***MDFB Position: Support***

This is a tax credit that is already in place in some of the other Southern Maryland Counties. It would allow for the preservation of the historic Tobacco Barns of Southern Maryland.

**SB345/HB386: Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions**

*Senator Brooks/Delegate Ruth | Senate Hearing: EEE 2/18/2025 at 1:00 PM*

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.

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

*Senator Hester/Delegate Pippy | Senate Hearing: EEE 2/18/2025 at 1:00 PM*

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 \$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.

**[SB732/HB909](#): Sewage Sludge Utilization Permits - Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances - Concentration Limits**

*Senator Love/Delegate Stein | EEE 2/18/2025 at 1:00 PM/ House Hearing: E&T 2/26/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Requiring certain sewage sludge utilization permits issued or renewed by the Department of the Environment to limit the concentration of certain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances to 1 microgram per kilogram, the level established in certain health-based standards, or the level established by the Department under the Act; establishing requirements for the demonstration of compliance with the limits established under the Act; and authorizing the Department to establish certain additional limits by regulation.

***MDFB Position: Monitor***

This bill would create testing requirements for sewage sludge and sewage sludge utilization permits. MDFB will monitor the hearing and the movement of this bill.

**[SB898/HB1175](#): Nutrient Management – Tidal Buffer – Vegetative Buffers and Restriction on Fertilizer Application**

*Senator Love/Delegate Stein | Senate Hearing: EEE 2/18/2025 at 1:00 PM*

Authorizing, in accordance with technical specifications adopted by the Department of Agriculture, that State cost-share funding be made available for installing various vegetative buffer practices on land within the 100-foot tidal buffer on an agricultural operation; prohibiting a nutrient management plan renewed after July 1, 2025, from allowing a person to apply certain fertilizer to land within the 100-foot tidal buffer; etc.

***MDFB Position: Oppose***

This legislation would cause issues for farmers within the critical area tidal buffer. The buffer with no use of fertilizer within the 100-foot buffer area would ultimately eliminate the ability to farm that land. The funding source for the grant program mentioned in the bill is not a secure source, also meaning that the program would create a mandate without funding.

**[SB932/HB1342](#): Pesticide and Pest Control - State-Owned Property - Pesticide Use Restrictions and Pollinator Habitat**

*Senator Young/Delegate Lehman | Senate Hearing: EEE 2/18/2025 at 1:00 PM/House Hearing: E&T 3/5/2025*

Authorizing a person to apply a pesticide on State-owned property only if the person is applying a listed pesticide or a registered pesticide for specified purposes; requiring the Department of Agriculture to develop a model pesticide and pollinator habitat management plan to be implemented on State-owned and managed property; and requiring a unit of State government that manages tracts of State-owned property to work with the Department to adapt the model plan.

***MDFB Position: Oppose***

This legislation would limit pesticide use on State-owned property and develop a model pollinator habit management plan to be implemented on State-owned and managed property.