



Maryland Farm Bureau

2026 Policy Book

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FOREWORD

Farm Bureau, the voice of agriculture, is a free, independent, non-governmental voluntary association of farm families and those with related interest.

Farm Bureau is local, statewide, national, and international in its scope and influence. It is non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character. It is organized to provide a means by which farmers can work together toward the goals upon which they agree. It is wholly controlled by its members and is financed by dues covering county, state, and national membership, paid annually by each member family.

Farm Bureau policies stem from our belief that agriculture in Maryland is an essential industry necessary to maintain the viability of our state. Farm families discuss issues, talk them over in the community and make recommendations. County resolutions derived from these community recommendations were adopted as policies on county issues and as recommendations on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies herein were derived from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm Bureau policy for 2026 as set by voting delegates 110th annual convention of the Maryland Farm Bureau on December 8th, 2025.

We firmly support the principles of equality under the law as outlined in the U.S. and Maryland State Constitutions. We support the USDA and Maryland Department of Agriculture in developing and implementing programs and policies that provide access and opportunities for all individuals who farm and ranch. '24

AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

Blueprint for Maryland's Future

We support advancing and implementing The Blueprint for Agricultural Education, as authored by MDFB, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, and Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association, as consistent with The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, specifically the Pillar 3, College and Career Readiness initiative. '23

In order to achieve the goal of educating students in the vast career pathways within agriculture, we support the needed personnel to administer and manage implementation of The Blueprint for Agricultural Education along with the necessary funding to expand certified agriculture education not only in the high schools and career & technology centers, but also into the middle schools. '23

As part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, MDFB supports agriculture education curricula as a focus of urban Community Schools. Community Schools must serve as hubs of coordinated community support partnerships that bring families, communities, and partners together to teach urban agriculture, build indoor grow areas and build outdoor Urban Farm classrooms in elementary schools, to develop new and beginner urban farmers and promote food security at an early age. '23

MDFB appreciates and urges continued support by the Secretary of Agriculture, Maryland Department of Agriculture, for agriculture education, and for the principles and funding request within "The Blueprint for Agricultural Education." '24

Maryland Farm Bureau supports establishing an Office of Agriculture Education to support teachers and students, Maryland FFA, and industry leaders. '24

Maryland Farm Bureau supports recognition of the combination of the State Degree awarded by Maryland FFA, classroom instruction, and Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE), as an industry recognized credential (IRC) within the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. '24

Career Technology Education

48 We support the career technology education program in Maryland. We recommend
49 that local boards of education, with state support, expand Maryland State Department of
50 Education (MSDE) approved agriculture education programs in middle schools and high schools.
51 We strongly recommend that the State board of education institute a more comprehensive
52 agriculture education program. '21

53 We highly recommend MDFB have representation on boards and commissions at the
54 Maryland State Department of Education, and the Department of Labor especially in Career &
55 Technology Education. '21

56 We support the Environmental, Agriculture & Natural Resources Pathway (Certified
57 Agriculture Education Program). The program should include all three rings of the Agriculture
58 Education model (classroom/laboratory instruction, FFA, and Supervised Agricultural
59 Experiences) and be fully funded and staffed to ensure all local and state programs are viable.
60 '22

61 We support agriculture educators receiving extra duty contracts to cover extracurricular
62 duties, professional development, funding, and resources needed for robust hands-on learning.
63 '24

Colleges & Universities

64 We urge the introduction or expansion of agricultural programs in colleges and
65 universities throughout the state. '21

66 Maryland should fund the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for farmers.
67 '19

Curriculum

68 We support an effective, systematic instructional program about agriculture in our
69 public schools. We believe the curriculum should include "Introduction to Agriculture Science"
70 starting in elementary school and continuing into middle school and high school to generate
71 awareness of the importance of agriculture to our society and to ensure future generations of
72 well-trained leaders for the agricultural industry. '19

73 We urge the public and private schools to implement a MSDE approved agricultural
74 education program that is available to all students. '21

75 We support MAEF's efforts to partner with stakeholders, including county public school
76 systems, farmers, and allies, to expand agricultural education in the State of Maryland. '19

77 We commend the Maryland Commission on Education in Agriculture for its study and
78 report concerning the enhancement of agricultural education in the state. We support the
79 Commission's recommendations to improve and enhance education in agricultural programs
80 throughout Maryland, especially the improved agricultural curriculum in Grades Pre-K-12 and
81 the recommendations for new and upgraded facilities. We encourage the continued efforts of
82 the Governor to expand and improve agricultural curriculum in the Maryland public school
83 system. '20

84 We support increased funding for Pre-K through 12th grade agricultural education
85 programs. Funds should be used for program development and improvement, staff
86 development, curriculum including CASE (Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education), Career
87 & Technology Education and extended day/year employment. We strongly support Ag science
88 teachers who provide student leadership in FFA and supervised agricultural experience as
89 components of the program. '19

90 We support the State of Maryland becoming an FFA affiliated State. '19

91 We oppose the expenditure of public funds to promote animal rights and the use of
92 educational materials in public schools that discourage the use of animal products. '19

95 We urge the state to include ag education in current environmental curriculums. '20

96 **Environmental & Agricultural Literacy Requirements**

97 We urge the state to create an "Ag Education for All" program that would allow all
98 students open access to agriculture programs in their school district which could include virtual
99 learning and/or transportation for all educational institutions. '20

100 We support and encourage on-farm field trips for all Pre-K-12 school systems to
101 experience the daily life of the farm. '20

102 The public needs to be made aware of the importance of the preservation of agricultural
103 land for a totally healthy environment. We encourage more farm city festivals, including farm
104 tours and educational displays so the public can have a better understanding of how food is
105 produced. '19

106 We recommend that curriculum for environmental & agricultural literacy as a
107 requirement for graduation be reviewed by MAEF. '21

108 MDFB recommends that environmental science curriculum be science-based and not
109 disparage agriculture. Science curriculums should reflect modern agricultural practices
110 including conservation practices, nutrient management, water quality enhancement, carbon
111 sequestration and best use land practices. '23

112 **Funding for MAEF & Ag Education**

113 We support the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation and its efforts to receive
114 legislative funding from the state special fund appropriations and funding through grant-in-aid
115 from the Maryland State Department of Education. '19

116 We support the Maryland Ag Tag, and we believe that all fees derived from sales should
117 continue to be used to support MAEF. '19

118 We further urge the state to restructure the funding formula for public education. '19

119 We oppose increasing the number of commemorative license plates beyond the
120 Maryland Ag Tag and Chesapeake Bay Tag. '21

121 **Teacher Training**

122 We recommend that training of teachers for Maryland public and private K-12 schools
123 and colleges include a mini-course in agriculture, and that state educational subdivisions
124 include an in-service day or days to instruct teachers and guidance counselors about agriculture
125 and careers in agriculture. '21

126 **State FFA**

127 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education to dedicate
128 guaranteed funding and to fully fund staffing for Maryland FFA administration. '22

129 We recommend expanding MSDE approved agriculture education programs and FFA
130 into middle schools. '21

131 We support the State of Maryland becoming an FFA affiliated State. '21

132 **Legislature Education**

133 We support and encourage Maryland State legislators to learn more about Maryland
134 agriculture through building relationships with Maryland farmers and encourage more farm
135 visits. '20

136 **AGRICULTURAL FAIRS**

137 We support an increase in funds to the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board (MAFB) to be
138 used to promote and assist agricultural fairs, 4-H exhibits, FFA and other qualifying agricultural
139 events. '21

141 We oppose restrictions or bans on the types of animals that are shown at state, county,
142 and community agricultural fairs, shows and exhibitions. '21

143 We support Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance exemptions for
144 agricultural fairs and Agri-tourism operations '24

145

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

146 We support the concept of agricultural land preservation and urge all landowners to
147 acquaint themselves with the programs available and the benefits derived thereof.
148 Furthermore, we urge the state and county governments to continue to support the voluntary
149 preservation of agricultural land with substantial increases in funding. We encourage them to
150 work with all interested stakeholders to develop innovative voluntary programs that maximize
151 farmland preservation while protecting landowner equity and private property rights and not
152 negatively impacting any other rights running with the land. '21

153 We strongly urge MALPF continue to be under the control and oversite of the Maryland
154 Secretary of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '21

155 We oppose taking productive agricultural land out of production for the purpose of
156 meeting requirements for forest conservation, buffers, and mitigation measures. The state
157 should conduct a survey to determine the loss of acreage of food producing land for these
158 purposes. '21

159 We encourage neighboring counties to work cooperatively to achieve agland
160 preservation goals provided county sovereignty is respected and all planning and zoning
161 decisions are made at the county level. '21

162 We support the Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation and county preservation
163 boards in their efforts to preserve agricultural land throughout the state. Furthermore, we urge
164 that these boards maintain the right to select land eligible for easement sale with priority
165 toward creating large contiguous blocks of preserved land. '21

166 The decision to target priority farms should be left to the county's agriculture land
167 preservation board under the current MALPF funding formula. '21

168 We support the right for farms currently enrolled in ag land preservation programs to be
169 competitive with other farms and allowed to offer innovative agritourism options. '21

170 We support sustainable forest management on preserved agricultural land. '21

171 We oppose taking preserved ag land by eminent domain. '24

172 We support maintaining the integrity of designated preservation areas. '25

173

Ag Preservation Funding

174 We urge full funding by the state and counties for agriculture land preservation
175 programs, including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program.
176 Payments for these programs should reflect current market values for farmland. '21

177 Farming and Silviculture that generates a profit should be an allowed use on agricultural
178 land purchased by the state, county, or municipalities. '21

179 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '21

180 We support permanent annual funding of MARBIDCO's Next Generation Farmland
181 Acquisition Program. '21

182 We oppose transfer and/or use of funds set aside for agricultural land preservation for
183 anything other than the preservation of farmland. '21

184 We oppose any attempt to cap all transfer tax funds used for agricultural land
185 preservation programs. '21

187 We support a line on state income tax returns to allow taxpayers to donate funds to the
188 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to preserve farmland. '21

189 Furthermore, we recommend that additional county and state incentives for
190 participation should be provided, such as property tax credits for agricultural district properties
191 committed to a term of five years or property tax credits on land where easements have been
192 purchased, and the enactment of a Maryland agricultural land property tax credit program as
193 part of the contract. '21

194 **Appraisals**

195 We urge the state to use local appraisers who should base their appraisals on the recent
196 sale or transfer of property in the immediate vicinity. We also believe that the appraisers
197 should be required to successfully complete a course of study specifically on agricultural land
198 appraisal approved by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. Furthermore,
199 appraisers should be required to take into consideration the value of standing timber, the
200 subdivision value of any property, as well as the uniqueness of the metropolitan areas when
201 making their appraisals. '21

202 **Mapping**

203 We oppose the identification and inclusion of state and county Ag land preservation
204 easement properties in land use and public facilities maps. Where so included and identified,
205 such areas should be prominently labeled as private property. '21

206 **Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation**

207 For the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) to operate more
208 efficiently, we believe that the Maryland General Assembly should develop a permanent annual
209 allotment for the Agricultural Land Preservation Program. We also believe the following
210 changes should be made:

- 211 (1) We direct MALPF to allow other forms of income when it does not interfere with the
212 present agriculture operation or change the agricultural capabilities of the land including
213 expanded permitted uses such as ag tourism and value-added operations. '21
- 214 (2) We support the right of value-added agricultural businesses on MALPF land to sell products
215 not produced or grown on the farm as a secondary attraction (e.g. sandwiches, t-shirts,
216 small gifts). '21
- 217 (3) We recommend that farms be allowed into the MALPF program without regard to mineral
218 rights issues. '21
- 219 (4) We strongly urge MALPF to permit the onsite extraction of gas from farmland under MALPF
220 easement '21

221 **Other Methods to Preserve Agriculture Land**

222 As another step toward preservation of agricultural land, we propose legislation to
223 create an Agricultural Land Condemnation Board, chaired by the State's Secretary of
224 Agriculture. Before anyone can condemn any productive agricultural lands for any purpose, the
225 involved body must appeal to the board. The board must determine that there is no
226 reasonable or prudent alternative. '21

227 We oppose the condemnation of prime and productive farmland for government
228 mandated mitigation projects without prior approval by the Agriculture Land Condemnation
229 Board. '21

230 **Transfer Development Rights**

231 We oppose the conveyance of Transferable Development Rights across county lines. '21

232 **Zoning**

233 We recommend that every county review their agricultural zoning and its impact on the
234 equity of landowners. '21

235 We support the preservation of agricultural land and equity through the process of
236 donating, purchasing, and transferring development rights. However, state mandated down-
237 zoning is totally unacceptable. We support local zoning authority only. '21

238 We recommend that state required land use planning documents for Parks & Recreation
239 and Ag Preservation be prepared separately. '21

240 We recommend when any land is enrolled for ag preservation, the land be downzoned
241 to agriculture zoning. '21

242 **AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY**

244 We encourage and support the passage of legislation to help resource-based industries
245 and alternative or value-added enterprises. We encourage the state to coordinate laws and
246 regulations with contiguous states. '10

247 On-farm value-added processing of agricultural products should be considered a part of
248 normal agricultural practices. '09

249 We support the right for Maryland farmers to make and process mulch and compost
250 from both on and off the farm sources. '14

251 We encourage MDA to work with state and county agencies to coordinate uniform
252 statewide rules concerning the marketing of locally produced meat, dairy and poultry products
253 at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and farm commissaries in non-commercial agricultural
254 buildings. '04

255 We encourage the State and USDA to streamline the process to expedite new and
256 expand existing custom butcher shops and livestock processing facilities. '20

257 We support the reinstitution of the State inspection program for local livestock
258 processing facilities to support direct sale to consumers. '20

259 We support State Certified cut and wrap facilities to meet consumer demand for local
260 meat products. '20

261 We encourage the state to work with USDA to develop a process by which locally
262 produced and processed meat and poultry can be shipped within and across state lines. This
263 may include the state investing in MDA meat inspectors to provide the necessary oversight at
264 custom butcher shops. '22

265 We support the development of regional or travelling meat processing facilities to
266 accommodate producers in all areas of the state and reduce the need to transport animals to
267 out-of-state processors. '13.

268 We support legislation and improvements in regulations that allow farm breweries more
269 opportunities for direct consumer sales. '11

270 We support agritainment as an acceptable use of agricultural land. '13

271 Agritourism should be defined as activities conducted on a farm and offered to the
272 public or to invited groups for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in
273 the farm operation.'14

274 We support wedding and event venues as an accessory use on a working farm '16

275 We support incidental outdoor stays as an accessory use on a working farm.

276 Regulations and approvals should be addressed on a county-by-county basis. '21

277 We encourage landowners to clearly define property boundaries for Agritourism
278 activities. '21

279 We oppose production of synthetically produced 'meats' being labeled as meat. '19
280 We support legislation to allow utility cooperatives to apply for grants to extend
281 broadband service to underserved rural areas. '19
282 We encourage the State of Maryland to review the regulation of Cottage Kitchens and
283 expand their capabilities as appropriate. '20
284 We oppose the closure of USDA research facilities including the Beltsville Agricultural
285 Research Center. '25
286

AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION

288 We urge MDE to consider all agricultural water withdrawal permits in use before
289 increasing water withdrawal permits or approving new water withdrawal permits for
290 municipalities or subdivisions when these lands coincide. '23
291 We urge MDA, MDE and DNR to work with the U.S. Geological Survey in updating
292 computer models for Maryland's underground aquifers. '23
293 We oppose any fees for permits or any fees for agriculture water use in the state. '23
294 We oppose the mandatory use of flow meters on Ag Water appropriation usage
295 permits. '23
296 Under the State Water Application Law, MDE is the only agency that may restrict water
297 usage in Maryland. We believe MDE should continue to be the only authority in this area.
298 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture's right to use water for irrigation.
299 '23
300 We support Agricultural water usage being exempt from any usage control. '23
301 We encourage MDE to streamline the agricultural water withdrawal permit process to
302 provide more timely approval. '23
303 Under MDE's water withdrawal permit, a farmer who uses less water than allocated for
304 a given month/year should not be penalized and should not receive a lower water allocation.
305 '23
306 When a water appropriation permit hearing is requested by an interested party, MDE
307 should require the interested party to be in attendance in person or virtually during the
308 hearing. If the requesting party fails to appear, the hearing should be dismissed. '23
309 We request MDE use "irrigated inches per acre" rather than "gallons per day" when
310 formulating water appropriation permits. '23
311 Surface water screening devices should not be required on man-made irrigation ponds.
312 '23
313 We urge the state government to designate pond/river screening devices be eligible for
314 cost share. '23
315

AIR QUALITY

317 Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of
318 air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when
319 considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. '18
320 We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean
321 air (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in
322 reducing equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. '18
323 We support a healthy environment, including good air quality, but we are opposed to
324 emission control rules and standards for farm equipment and all on-road vehicles used to

325 transport agriculture commodities to and from the farm that would require the retrofitting of
326 our equipment to meet those standards. '22

327 We support the creation of a cost-share program to help farmers adapt to climate
328 change regulations. '22

329 We oppose bans on the tools and practices we use to farm. '22

330 We oppose exhaust emissions from farm machinery along with dust and particulate
331 matter generated from agricultural activity being subject to the federal Clean Air standards
332 instituted in 1997. '18

333 We oppose regulations dealing with exhaust of ammonia or methane gases from all
334 agricultural activities. '22

335 We recommend MDE allow the burning of agricultural use buildings. Buildings to be
336 burned should meet safety standards for burning set by county codes. Burning should be
337 supervised by the local fire company. '18

338 We encourage MDA to assemble an ag air quality expert panel with the mission to
339 review, vet and validate regional ag emissions research & publications to ensure pertinence to
340 real world conditions. This panel should consist, at minimum of the MD & DE state
341 climatologists, MD & DE extension animal science specialists and representatives from the dairy
342 and poultry associations. '18

343 We oppose the creation of a state carbon and/or Greenhouse Gas reduction tax/fee. '18

344 We Oppose requiring CAFO's to install air quality monitoring devices. '18

345 We support air quality monitoring data be managed by University of Maryland
346 Extension. '18

347 We oppose any legislation or state regulation that would mandate the use of zero
348 emissions medium and heavy-duty trucks and farm equipment. '22

349

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

350 We recommend legislation be enacted that would require the assignment and
351 prominent display of an identifying number on all ATV's, dirt bikes, etc. '16

352 Furthermore, parents and guardians should be held responsible for damage caused by
353 ATV's ridden by their minor children. '04.

354 Landowners should not be held responsible for injury to riders or damage to ATV's when
355 operated on private lands. '14

356 We recognize the use of all-terrain vehicles as necessary agricultural vehicles in the day-
357 to-day business of agricultural operations. We support a farmer's ability to cross and travel
358 state and county roads to get from one part of his/her farm to another. '21

359

ALCOHOL PRODUCTION – ON FARM

360 We support the recognition of vineyards & wineries, farm breweries and farm distilleries
361 – and their related activities – as agriculture. '15

362 We support the definition of winery to include vineyards, processing of grapes and other
363 fruit, wine making, storage of wine, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of wine and
364 related products, food service, and other associated activities. '21

365 We support the definition of farm brewery to include agricultural products used for
366 brewing, processing of hops and grains, malting, fermentation, storage of beer, promotional
367 events, tasting rooms, sales of beer and related products, food service, and other associated
368 activities. '15

371 We support the definition of farm distillery to include agricultural products used for
372 distilling, processing of grains and fruit, fermentation and distillation, storage of distilled
373 products, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of distilled and related products, food
374 service, and other associated activities. '15

375 We support the recognition of wineries, farm breweries and farm distilleries as usage of
376 right in agricultural and rural conservation zones if they are an addition to a working farm with
377 home grown and/or locally grown products used in processing. '23

378 We support wineries', farm breweries' and farm distilleries' rights to market their
379 product as broadly and as widely as possible, including in "Farmer's Markets" listed by the
380 Department of Agriculture under annual permits issued by the Office of the Comptroller. '15

381 We support research and funding in cooperation with MDA and UMD that enhances the
382 viability of commercial viticulture, on farm brewing and distilling in Maryland. '15

383 We support brewers' right to supply spent grain to local farmers. '15

384 We support the inclusion of the inventory of grape, hop and brewery grain production in
385 the state in future MDA and NASS agricultural statistical surveys. '15

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS

388 We support research into cost-effective alternative uses for agricultural commodities
389 including value-added products that would increase demand, and thus, improve marketing
390 potential. '18

391 We support continuing research and development of alternate and renewable energy
392 resources. '18

393 We strongly urge the local, state, and federal government agencies to support new
394 alternative Ag enterprises to aid in market development; and, to provide education so that new
395 enterprises can become viable sources of income in agriculture. '18

396 We support on-farm retail and farmers' markets being exempt from plastic bag bans or
397 taxes that restrict the use of single-use bags '20

ANIMAL CARE

400 We oppose any legislation that would interfere with the right of farmers to raise
401 livestock and poultry in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices. '18

402 We encourage farmers to be proactive by using voluntary quality and environmental
403 assurance programs. '18

404 We support properly researched and industry-tested poultry and livestock practices that
405 provide consumers with a wholesome food supply and enable farmers to improve the care and
406 management of their animals. '18

407 We oppose any legislation or regulation that would prohibit or unduly restrict the use of
408 animals in agricultural or medical research. '18

409 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in
410 educating the food industry, school children, the public and those elected to represent us in
411 government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,
412 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated
413 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.
414 '18

415 We support the right of farmers to protect their livestock and poultry from predatory
416 animals and birds. '19

417 We recommend that a farm operation suspected of animal cruelty be inspected by a
418 university animal science specialist or licensed veterinarian to determine whether a cruelty
419 situation exists before charges are filed or animals removed from the site. '18

420 We oppose animal rights activism that disrupts farming operations, Ag related activities
421 on and off the farm, fairs, racetracks, livestock sales or research facilities. '18

422 We oppose any initiatives, referendums, or legislation that create standards beyond
423 sound veterinary science and best management practices in regard to raising, marketing,
424 handling, feeding, housing, or transporting of livestock and poultry. '23

425 **Antibiotic Feed Additives**

426 Antibiotic feed additives found safe and effective by the Food and Drug Administration
427 should not be restricted. '18

428 We support continued research to provide a definitive answer to the question of the use
429 of antibiotics in agribusiness and to the health of the public. '18

430 We oppose mandatory reporting of on-farm antibiotic usage data. '18

431 **Livestock and Poultry**

432 Government officials and inspectors must be required to always follow stringent
433 biosecurity practices and respect private property rights when visiting farms. '17

434 We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. '17

435 We urge MDA to work with USDA to review and clarify the tagging process under the
436 Premise ID program for all livestock producers. '17

437 We strongly oppose any ban of the use of cages in layer operations. '23

438 **Vaccines**

439 We recommend additional research for developing diagnostics and vaccines, (including
440 mRNA, novel and emerging vaccine development) to understand the biology of organisms and
441 determining why diseases emerge. We and the international community must give priority to
442 current and future emerging infectious diseases. We support the use of mRNA vaccines
443 contingent on USDA and FDA approval. We oppose efforts to restrict access to any approved
444 livestock or poultry vaccine technology, including specific and/or prescriptive label
445 requirements for such vaccines or vaccine technology. '24

446

447 **ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES**

448 We recommend the Maryland Department of Agriculture update, remodel and maintain
449 regional animal health laboratories. '25

450 We urge Maryland Department of Agriculture to fund and staff-all positions without
451 delay.'25

452 A strong animal health program needs to be supported by the state. We support full
453 accreditation of Maryland's Animal Health Labs at Salisbury and Frederick. With biosecurity
454 and Agri-terrorism concerns and to support the well-being of Maryland's livestock industries, it
455 is crucial that the laboratory services are available with modern state-of-the-art technology. '25

456

457 **AQUACULTURE**

458 Aquaculture is a branch of agriculture, and all applicable regulations shall be a function
459 of MDA. DNR, as a regulatory agency, shall be removed from control of all aquaculture
460 products and production regardless of location. All current DNR laws and regulations affecting
461 aquaculture shall be referred to MDA for modification and implementation as agricultural laws
462 and regulations. Restrictions and policies implemented by DNR relating to the management of
463 wild aquatic resources shall not infringe in any manner on aquaculture activities. '20

464 We support the Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council's recommendations that
465 provide science-based guidance on how aquaculture should be managed '20

466 We support legislation that will strengthen laws related to theft of oysters from
467 aquaculture operations, including enforcement of oyster theft under criminal property larceny
468 charges. We also support amending the elements of the current criminal charge law to allow
469 proof of cut buoys versus those frayed by natural causes. We recommend changes to the
470 Natural Resources Article to include language to enforce Maryland's criminal property larceny
471 law against not only oyster aquaculture thieves who knowingly steal from aquaculture leases,
472 but also those who knowingly possess illegally harvested oysters. '22

473 The scope of County Agricultural Reconciliations Boards includes aquaculture activities
474 and watermen. The Agricultural Reconciliation Board should include one or more individuals
475 who are actively engaged in aquaculture and/or working as a waterman, where applicable. '25

AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD

478 We recognize that Blue Crabs in the Chesapeake Bay are a highly valuable resource for
479 both commercial and recreational activities. Regulations controlling this fishery should be
480 managed through modern data collection and sound science, with input from all stakeholders
481 as well as the Bi-State Blue Crab Technical Committee and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. '06

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

484 The use of artificial intelligence in agriculture has the potential to offer enhanced
485 efficiency through precision agriculture, optimizing resources and improving agricultural
486 production. At the same time, the needs of farmers and ranchers must be considered as the
487 regulatory structure for this new technology is developed. '25

488 Liability and Insurance

489 We support clear and transparent contractual agreements that outline liability
490 arrangements between AI service providers and farmers and ranchers, specifying the extent of
491 responsibility in various scenarios. '25

492 We support the availability of specialized AI liability insurance products tailored to the
493 unique risks associated with AI in agriculture. '25

BEEKEEPING

496 We support increased funding for the MDA Apiary Inspection Department (within Plant
497 Protection and Weed Management) for both personnel hours and equipment necessary to
498 perform inspections. '22

499 We support fully funding The Honeybee Lab at the University of Maryland, which
500 conducts critical scientific research and outreach programs throughout the state as well as
501 providing extension services to Maryland beekeepers through its Bee Squad. '22

502 We oppose laws or regulations that prevent or discourage the keeping of honeybees
503 and other pollinators in Maryland, including county zoning ordinances. '22

504 We support the planting of pollinator habitat by county and state agencies on roadsides,
505 rights of way, and similar areas in place of grasses, if the habitat is not a noxious or invasive
506 species of plants. '22

BROWNFIELDS

508 We encourage the use of Brownfields as a means of solar generation in lieu of the use of
509 prime and productive farmland. '22

511 We encourage the repurpose of Brownfields within planned urban developments and
512 city limits to be used for urban agriculture. '22

513

CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS

514 Farmers and Ranchers should be protected from harmful actions, exempted from
515 liability, and be eligible to receive financial relief if Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS),
516 chemical contaminants or other harmful substances are found on a farm or ranch caused by
517 application as a passive receiver without disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23

518 We recommend further testing for other possible PFAS and chemical contamination
519 sources in ground water. '23

520 No PFAS or chemical contaminant regulations should be promulgated at either the state
521 or federal level without conclusive scientific data. '23

522 We oppose landowners, producers, or their lenders being held liable for the cost of
523 chemical contaminant remediation, caused by application as a passive receiver without
524 disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23

525 We support funding for remediation or retirement of agricultural fields or animals if
526 required by the state due to PFAS or other chemical contamination, caused by application as a
527 passive receiver without disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23

528

CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

529 We oppose regulations that put farmers who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed at a
530 competitive disadvantage. States within the Bay Watershed should act as a cohesive unit when
531 implementing regulations or practices to avoid creating a competitive disadvantage to one or
532 more states. '13

533 We fully support federal programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program at
534 USDA that reward and encourage farmers to install conservation practices. '09

535 We recommend that industry, urban run-off, wastewater treatment plants, etc. be given
536 the same time limit as agriculture to reduce the impact of nutrient loading on the Chesapeake
537 Bay. Emphasis should be placed on municipal, urban, and industrial areas regarding water
538 quality, nutrient management, and solid waste disposal. '10

539 We urge the state to remove the sediment and nutrients trapped behind the Conowingo
540 Dam as a priority in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. '13

541 All non-compliant discharges and spills from wastewater treatment plants should be
542 reported immediately and be made readily available to the public. This information should be
543 posted in a cumulative manner and should be on a per watershed basis. '11

544 The entire Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries should be considered a no discharge zone
545 in reference to marine vessels. '15

546 We recognize the Chesapeake Bay as a valuable natural resource. We support efforts to
547 restore the health of the Bay and we encourage farmers to utilize Best Management Practices
548 in their agricultural operations. '07

549 We urge continued and increased funding for research and implementation of BMPs on
550 farms, including nutrient management plans and the construction of ponds, waterways, and
551 buffer strips to reduce run-off and ground water contamination. '12

552 We recommend that cost share programs be evaluated and revised as necessary to
553 ensure equity for participants. '07

556 We urge the UMD, MDA and MDE to jointly develop and utilize thorough, accurate and
557 current information for describing the condition of the natural resource base in Maryland and
558 the contribution of the agricultural industry in protecting and enhancing that base. '09

559 We recommend that greater attention and research be given to what is happening in
560 the water column of the Bay itself. The filter feeders and small aquatic life will have to be a
561 part of the long-term solution for the Bay cleanup. Harvesting moratoriums, restrictions on
562 harvesting methods, and other measures should be considered. '16

563 State funding should be dramatically increased for revival of oysters, targeting surface
564 raised oysters and other filter feeders. '14

565 We support the allowance of tax credits to be sold through a broker system based on
566 the current income tax subtraction modification for the purchasing of conservation equipment
567 '15

568 Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up

569 We support a dedicated fund for conservation programs that financially assists farmers
570 and other non-point source contributors who implement practices to improve the water quality
571 of the Chesapeake Bay. '07

572 All dedicated funds for Chesapeake Bay clean-up should be restricted solely to improve
573 the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. '10

574 We support maintaining the cover crop portion of the Bay Restoration Fund at no less
575 than 40% of all funds collected from septic users. '11

576 Storm water Management Regulations and Fees

577 We believe the storm water management fee (rain tax) that has been assessed in many
578 counties is too high on farmland. Farmers are already taking steps to address the agricultural
579 goals in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup plan (TMDL WIP). Farmers are spending money to install
580 Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent soil erosion, run off and nutrient movement.
581 Farmers should not also have to pay to address urban storm water control measures. '13

582 We also oppose the expansion to other counties of the existing storm water utility
583 fees.'13

584 Agricultural structures and supporting grounds should not be held to the same storm
585 water management standards as commercial buildings. '11

586 The construction of all new agricultural structures should be exempt from having a
587 storm water management plan. '12

588 TMDL & Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)

589 Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and the Total Maximum Daily Load
590 (TMDL) for the Bay and its tributaries will place an unfair economic disadvantage on farms in
591 the Bay watershed as compared to farms elsewhere. As the percentage of nutrient load from
592 urban areas continues to increase, it would be inequitable for agriculture to be burdened with
593 excessive offsets and trading. We ask that cost vs. benefit be carefully considered in all debate
594 on environmental policies. No programs should be implemented without a financial impact
595 study being done. Government should direct actions that are the best that can be achieved
596 within reasonable limits to reduce impacts to the Bay. '19

597 We urge funding for all cost-share programs for farmers to implement the TMDL and
598 funding for staff and technical support for the UMD Extension and the Soil Conservation
599 Districts. '10

600 As the TMDL WIP is implemented, private property rights should be protected. State
601 and local governments should be precluded from attaining goals by mandating agricultural land
602 retirement using eminent domain or regulation. '13

603 If the implementation of environmental regulations results in the removal of
604 agricultural land from production or the installation of conservation practices, then the farmer
605 should be compensated for the land and maintenance of the practices. '18

606 We support new dedicated federal funding for the Conowingo Watershed
607 Implementation Plan (WIP). '21

609 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

610 We oppose bans on common agricultural production practices. '23

611 **Farmers' Markets**

612 We strongly encourage the continuance of all farmers' markets. '21

613 We support legislation that will promote farmers' markets by creating a central registry
614 of Maryland farmers' markets, to include roadside stands, agricultural product sales locations,
615 or other locations that advertise, promote, or use the term "farmers' market." '21

616 We encourage legislation that will limit legal liability to registered farmers' market
617 operators. '21

618 We oppose the use of the title "Farmers' Market" for a store that is not truly a Farmers'
619 Market. We urge Maryland to adopt a law that defines how and when the term Farmers'
620 Market may be used. '24

621 **Labeling Requirements**

622 We strongly support truth in labeling of food and food products. '21

623 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

624 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise.
625 We urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's
626 efforts to improve marketing services. We support the "Maryland's Best" marketing program.
627 '21

628 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that
629 serve all citizens. '21

630 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Commerce to continue its policy of
631 providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural industries. '21

632 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of
633 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities, including grain for export.'23

634 We support state grants and financial support for local co-ops, grain facilities,
635 marketing, and food processing facilities. '22

636 **Deep Water Terminal**

637 We support a viable grain export terminal. '21

638 The State of Maryland must work diligently to develop a competitive grain trade deep
639 water terminal, which is critical for the survival of grain producers. '21

640 **Roadside Markets**

641 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural
642 products. '21

643 We encourage the enforcement of existing county zoning laws related to farmers'
644 markets and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer
645 merchants and/or non-local merchants. '21

646 We support On-Farm Home Processing license be available not only to owners of land
647 but lessee of land as well. '25

648 **Roadside Signs**

649 Due to the need for the farmers to diversify their operations the use of roadside signs is
650 imperative to let the public know your location and which products are available. Therefore,
651 we support exempting such signs from the regulations governing roadside signs. '21

652 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

653 We oppose any segment of the farm community promoting their production methods as
654 healthier or better for the environment without evidence to support those claims. '21

655 **Value Added**

656 We support the development of a statewide value-added processing system. '21

657 We support the removal of the revenue cap for the on-farm-home processing license.

658 '24

659

660 **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

661 We oppose taking of land in conservation easements by eminent domain. '24

662 **Best Management Practices**

663 The process of obtaining a permit from the appropriate government agencies to do any
664 type of work in or along the small streams that flow through our farmland has become
665 extremely burdensome and time consuming. We urge these government agencies to approve
666 general permits to install approved best management practices. '17

667 We encourage agricultural landowners and tenant operators to study, develop and
668 implement long-term programs or lease arrangements with conservation practice systems,
669 including nutrient management plans that will achieve the desired water quality benefits. '17

670 Interpretation and definition of Best Management Practices (BMPs) must recognize the
671 economic impact and cost to the farmer. '17

672 If accepted best management practices are implemented in good faith and later
673 determined to have a negative impact on the environment or natural resources, the landowner
674 should not be held legally or financially responsible. '17

675 Farmers and landowners shall be allowed to install culverts in non-blue line ditches to
676 increase the accessibility of their land. '17

677 **Conservation Practices**

678 We support the reclassification of Class 3 trout streams, which contain no native trout
679 to Class 4 streams. '17

680 Any contract poultry grower in Maryland, regardless of capacity, should be eligible for
681 cost share funds for both manure sheds and composters. '17

682 We support landowner wildlife plantings but encourage the restriction of tree and shrub
683 plantings within 25 feet of any right-of-way to reduce the cost of trimming at taxpayer expense
684 and to enhance public safety. '17

685 We strongly oppose any effort to classify conservation enhancements on private land as
686 public domain for recreation or hunting purposes. '17

687 We urge the state to assure that adequate funds be available to provide sufficient cost
688 sharing of approved soil conservation practices. We also urge the state to provide an adequate
689 number of trained personnel in local Soil Conservation District to assist farmers and property
690 owners in the development and implementation of their conservation plans, making sure the
691 plans not only provide the needed environmental protection but are practical and economical
692 as well. '17

693 We oppose any effort to replace technical expertise within the Natural Resources
694 Conservation Service or Soil Conservation Districts with non-governmental organization (NGO)
695 personnel. '18

696 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

697 We strongly recommend that public agencies should not be eligible for funding under
698 the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). '17

699 We believe that programs that offer incentives for conservation, wildlife habitat
700 creation and preservation should minimize the loss of prime farmland while maintaining our
701 natural resources. '17

702 We propose changes to the CREP that are intended to keep prime land available for
703 production, reduce the economic incentive to take whole farms or major portions thereof out
704 of production, to remove the government as a primary cash rent competitor for valuable
705 agricultural land and to provide for more effective maintenance of land under CREP contract.
706 '17

707 Our proposed changes include the following:

- 708 (1) CREP contracts should be issued only on land that has a scientifically supported impact
709 on water quality. CREP should not be used to create wildlife habitat where water quality
710 benefit is negligible. '17
- 711 (2) Buffers should be variable, with a maximum width of 100 feet, based on topographical
712 and soil conditions to ensure water quality benefits and minimize loss of productive
713 cropland. '17
- 714 (3) Buffers established adjacent to ditches should have a maximum width of 50 feet and
715 should be smaller if prime and productive soils are impacted. Buffers should not include
716 trees within 35 feet of a ditch to facilitate maintenance of the ditch. The practice of
717 digging ditches just to enroll the entire acreage on farms should be prohibited. '17
- 718 (4) Regulations should be developed to require weed control on all land subject to a CREP
719 contract. The maintenance and control rules should be enforced. '17
- 720 (5) Mowing of CREP lands should be required annually if weeds cannot be controlled by
721 other means. CREP lands should be maintained in accordance with Maryland Department
722 of Agriculture Noxious Weed Regulations. '25
- 723 (6) Rental rates for future CREP contracts should be adjusted to provide for a sliding-scale
724 that pays more for land immediately adjacent to water and less for land closer to prime
725 and productive soils. Rates should be in line with local rental rates. '17

726 We urge federal, state, and local agencies to conduct field inspections on CREP contracts
727 that include noxious weed compliance. If landowners are not in compliance with the contract,
728 agencies should work with landowners to gain compliance. '17

729 USDA landlord/tenant rules should be strictly enforced to prevent losses to farmers who
730 have already invested resources into land being considered for a CREP contract. '17

731 Upon re-enrollment of land under a CREP contract, a farm should not be required to
732 destroy existing vegetation and replant if the existing CREP land has been properly maintained
733 and will meet the water quality and erosion control goals of the program. '17

735 COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

736 Cover Crop Program

737 The cover crop program administered by MDA should remain a voluntary cost-share
738 program and should be amended as follows:

- 739 (1) It should be made permanent. '07

740 (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs '10
741 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '17
742 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is
743 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
744 (5) Farmers should receive the same cover crop payment for manure incorporated land that
745 they would be paid for no till land, due to new manure incorporation requirements. '13
746 (6) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain
747 crops and hay acreage. '07
748 (7) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
749 (8) It should allow flexible planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '13
750 (9) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast
751 seeding. '07
752 (10) All aerial seeding methods should be funded as all other methods of seeding and should
753 not exclude double crop acres or soybeans. '25
754 (11) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it
755 on the farm. '18
756 (12) The annual signup date for the program should be from June 1st through September 1st.
757 '12
758 (13) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested,
759 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09
760 (14) Fields should be allowed to contain blends of different cover crops if a nitrogen scavenger
761 crop is included in the blends. This should include the addition of legumes to such blends. '12
762 (15) Change seeding rates mandated for the cereal species that currently exist to be in
763 accordance with current University of Maryland Extension research findings. '12
764 (16) Give the option to adjust seeding rates and planting methods to facilitate late season
765 termination, green planting, intercropping, or relay cropping as an alternative to cover crop
766 burndown. '16
767 (17) Seeding rate should be calculated using germination rate and size of seed to achieve a
768 number of viable seeds per acre. '17
769 (18) Add sorghum to the eligible standing crops that the \$10 bonus aerial application for cover
770 crop can be seeded into. '19
771 (19) Recommend that MDA issue the first cover crop split payment before December 15th and
772 any final payments within 15 days after the crop termination report has been submitted. '19
773 (20) Recommend two regions for planting windows with one region being the Eastern Shore
774 and the second region being the Western Shore. '25
775 (21) Recommend the aforementioned planting windows have the flexibility to meet the needs
776 of weather conditions presented during the year.'25
777 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program.
778 '10
779 Maryland farmers and/or Ag organizations should have input on cover crop program
780 and rate changes before those changes are implemented. '14
781 We oppose mandatory cover crop programs. '25
782 **Cost Share Programs**
783 Cost share programs need to expand to include small animal unit operations. '14
784 We recommend the flat rates and components of a practice be reviewed and revised
785 annually with agricultural input to reflect current cost. '14

786 Maryland farmers/agricultural organizations should have input into state cost share
787 program changes before those changes are implemented. '14

788 We recommend that NRCS, Soil Conservation District and Maryland Department of
789 Agriculture resources be increased, and/or the approval process be streamlined to reduce a
790 backlog of cost share applications. '16

791 We recommend that the State fund the MACS program with General Obligation Bonds.
792 '17

793 We urge MDA's Maryland Ag Cost Share (MCS) program establish a higher cost-share
794 rate for Young and Beginning Farmers. '20

795 The State should continue to fund the Manure Transport cost-share program. '20

796 We urge the MDA conservation grants and the USDA conservation contract programs to
797 reevaluate contract terms if the cost of labor and materials increase over 5% before completion
798 of the contract. '21

799 We encourage development of a cost share program for producers to construct or
800 install a methane digester for any livestock waste. '23

CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

801 We recommend that the membership of the Critical Areas Commission be comprised of
802 at least 50% farmers who own property within 1,000 feet of the critical area. '21

803 Due to the impact on the agricultural community, we urge county governments to work
804 with their county Farm Bureaus when they develop their local programs. '21

805 We are opposed to the inclusion of upstream tributaries and non-tidal water into the
806 Critical Areas Program. '21

807 We support legislation that would require the state to compensate, at the fair market
808 value, Maryland property owners who are monetarily affected by the Critical Area Legislation
809 and/or the Endangered Species Act. '21

810 The inability to harvest timber in the critical areas is creating an inequitable financial
811 loss for the landowner. We recommend that the landowner be compensated for this loss. '21

812 We are concerned about exemptions granted within the Critical Area for marinas and
813 other recreational water related activities. '21

CROP PROTECTION

814 We urge keeping all federally labeled crop protection products legal in the state,
815 counties, and municipalities. '19

816 We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them
817 by approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '19

818 To help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to maintain a
819 biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old chemicals, chemical
820 containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '19

821 We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned
822 chemicals. '19

823 Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water
824 contaminated by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to
825 label instructions. '19

826 Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not
827 on emotional issues. '19

832 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The
833 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an
834 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to
835 farm his property. '19

836 We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to
837 aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '19

838 We oppose the collection and distribution of pesticide use data beyond that collected in
839 the USDA NASS survey. '19

840 We oppose the establishment of a pesticide use data reporting system that would make
841 information available to the public or to "interested" researchers. '19

842 We urge the Maryland State Chemist to approve special exemption labels for crop
843 protectants when they are approved by adjacent states. '23

Disease Prevention & Pest Control

845 We support the monitoring of plant diseases such as Asian Soybean Rust in the exotic
846 plants used by homeowners and landscapers that may include invasive weed species that serve
847 as alternate hosts. We urge MDA to study these plant species and bolster its efforts to assure
848 that all new plants have no negative impact on farm crops or nursery stock. '19

849 We support existing restrictions on the movement of Ash trees to prevent the spread of
850 the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. '19

851 We support funding for joint research by universities to study and eliminate the Brown
852 Marmorated Stink Bug and the Spotted Lanternfly. '20

Environmental Surcharge

854 We are opposed to any state tax or surcharge on fertilizers and crop protectants to fund
855 environmental programs. '19

Pesticide Stewardship

857 We support participating in a Pesticide Stewardship Education program with MDA,
858 Extension and other commodity groups for educational outreach geared towards consumers.
859 '19

CYBER SECURITY FOR THE FOOD CHAIN

862 We support research and implementation of cyber-Ag. security programs to protect
863 local and state supply chains. '21

DAIRY INDUSTRY

866 We strongly support the combined efforts of Maryland Farm Bureau with the University
867 of Maryland Dairy Extension Program and the Dairy Industry Advisory Council to develop a
868 program that will enhance the transparency of the pricing of milk to producers, raise milk
869 prices, and increase the stability and viability of the dairy industry in Maryland. '24

870 We urge the state to fund the Maryland Dairy Farmer Emergency Trust fund with a
871 minimum of \$5 million per year. '17

872 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to staff at least one full-time dairy
873 specialist. '17

Milk Marketing

875 Maintaining consumer confidence in dairy products is critical to the viability of the dairy
876 industry. Dairy product labeling should be truthful, accurate and be able to be substantiated.
877 '17

878 Milk is a liquid produced by the mammary glands of mammals, and only products
879 meeting this definition should be permitted to be labeled, advertised and sold in Maryland as
880 milk.'17

881 All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as "raw, unpasteurized milk"
882 only.'24

883 We believe schools should not provide milk to students after the sell-by date.'17

884 We support placing milk vending machines in all schools.'17

885 We urge Maryland Public Schools to remove skim milk for the food options and replace
886 with no less than 2% milk.'18

887 We urge Maryland Public Schools to add a minimum of 2% flavored milk to the food
888 options.'25

889 We urge schools to provide whole milk to students and all children.'24

890 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

891 We oppose new or increased fees for dairy farmers, haulers, and cooperatives.'17

892 We support the right for farms to produce and sell raw, unpasteurized milk for human
893 consumption, with appropriate permits.'24

894 Raw, unpasteurized milk sold in Maryland must be produced in Maryland.'24

895 We oppose the use of cattle-share or farm-share agreements to circumvent raw milk
896 sales laws.'24

897 We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Health and legislators amend COMAR to
898 reflect the current Pasteurized Milk Ordinance to allow a 72-hour milk pickup window.'22

901 **DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

902 Counties should have, under local zoning control, authority over approval and siting of
903 digital infrastructure.'25

904 We urge the study of potential electrical corporation costs associated with the
905 installation of new transmission and distribution assets to serve new digital infrastructure,
906 including the costs of stranded assets and assets installed for an entity that ceases operation.
907 '25

908 We support:

- 909 (1) The use of recycled water for cooling for any new proposed digital infrastructure,
910 including data centers.'25
- 911 (2) Transparency by local authorities in the siting of digital infrastructure.'25
- 912 (3) Requiring data centers to supply their own power before tapping into the grid.'25
- 913 (4) Study of how data center development will impact agricultural land, noise pollution,
914 and the demand on existing power grid infrastructure.'25
- 915 (5) Infrastructure must be in place before a data center is considered for development.
916 '25

917 We oppose:

- 918 (1) Digital infrastructure being built on Class 1 and Class 2 agricultural soils.'25
- 919 (2) Any new utility-scale solar development being publicly or privately required for any
920 new proposed digital infrastructure.'2
- 921 (3) Localities using eminent domain to provide land, water or electricity to digital
922 infrastructure facilities or sites.'25

DREDGE SPOIL

We support the dredging of Baltimore Harbor, which would improve ship traffic and benefit the state's economy.'07

When deposit sites are needed, dredge spoil shall be used to replenish low areas that were once highland that are now wet or have eroded away. '05

We oppose dumping of dredge spoils into open water. '14

We oppose dumping of dredge spoil from behind the Conowingo Dam on prime and productive farmland. '20

ENDANGERED SPECIES

We support a voluntary conservation habitat reserve program that would provide incentives for landowners to establish and maintain habitat for endangered species. '22

Compensation shall be provided for landowners where use of the land is restricted by the Endangered Species Act. '22

We urge the state to eliminate from the list those species (threatened or endangered) that might have limited numbers in Maryland but are common elsewhere. '22

Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal law. '22

Any plant or animal that is taken because of an agricultural practice shall be considered an incidental taking. '22

We support adding the Northern Long Eared Bat (and other endangered bat species) to the list of species in Maryland authorized to have a Habitat Protection Plan (HCP) for incidental take to lessen the impacts to farms, forests, and land management. '24

ENERGY POLICY

We strongly support a comprehensive, long-term energy policy that fully utilizes domestic energy resources and aggressively promotes the access, availability, and affordability for agriculture. '22

We support an increase in off-shore and land-based drilling for oil and natural gas to enhance supplies, lower prices and reduce dependence on foreign sources. '19

We strongly support the development of shale gas in Maryland. '19

We urge that farm rates and demand charges be comparable across electric providers.

We oppose the banning of small gas engines. '21

We oppose the decommissioning of existing commercial power generating facilities until an equally or more powerful, viable energy generating source is ready to operate in Maryland.

We support that energy generated in Maryland should be for the benefit of Maryland residents. '24

We support that new transmission lines should not cross over Agri-tourism operations.
'25

We urge that the utility-scale solar development cap be no more than 2% of a county's "Priority Preservation Areas" (PPA). '25

Ethanol & Biodiesel Fuel

We support an energy independence and efficiency policy to include: (1) site approval, environmental issues, funding, and approval of renewable energy sources; (2) the use of renewable fuels in county, state, and federal automobile fleets; (3) support for the construction

971 of ethanol and biofuels plants in Maryland; and (4) support for production and use incentives
972 for ethanol and biodiesel. '19

973 We urge the use of some ethanol in gasoline and biodiesel and renewable_diesel in
974 diesel fuel. '22

975 We urge new research to improve ethanol, biodiesel, and renewable diesel
976 compatibility with medium and heavy-duty vehicles as well as farm equipment to meet new
977 engine standards. '22

978 We urge that all state and county government vehicles (including school buses) use
979 biodiesel and renewable diesel or ethanol fuels. '22

980 We support the use of renewable fuels as an alternative to electric medium and heavy-
981 duty vehicles. '22

982 We encourage the maritime industries to use bio-diesel fuel on the Chesapeake Bay and
983 in other Maryland waterways. '19

984 We strongly believe that public officials need to seriously consider the opportunities and
985 potential for increasing local or domestic demand of commodities through the production of
986 Ethanol E-85. '19

987 We recommend that the Maryland Department of Transportation make changes to
988 guidelines so that current E85 (85% blend gasoline/ethanol) models may be used in fleets to
989 meet alternative fuel mandates. '19

990 We urge the support of government agencies such as the Department of Commerce in
991 the development of biofuels in Maryland. '21

992 Other Alternative Energy Sources

993 We encourage research, development, and utilization of alternative energy sources
994 from methane, biomass, wind, nuclear, solar, hydrogen, hydro, and clean natural gas. '19

995 Additionally, we urge that this process be aided by appropriate government tax
996 incentives. '19

997 We support energy generation from all agricultural residues and biproducts to be
998 considered value-added production on a farm. '20

999 We support initiatives to generate heat & electricity from timber resources. '19

1000 We support the use of on-farm wind and solar energy production to provide electric
1001 energy for the farm and to be sold to the energy grid. We encourage state and county
1002 governments to provide regulatory support and encouragement for wind generators and
1003 turbines to help offset farm energy costs. '19

1004 We oppose commercial and community solar energy facilities being considered as an
1005 agricultural activity. '22

1006 We oppose the use of "farm" when referring to an alternative energy generation facility.
1007 '19

1008 We oppose the State of Maryland preemption of local and county land use policy for
1009 renewable energy generation projects. '19

1010 We support removing large scale commercial solar energy generating facilities from the
1011 RPS carve-out for solar energy. '19

1012 We support further research of the economic merit of Agrivoltaics and the impacts of
1013 increased solar to the energy grid. '23

1014 We oppose community or commercial solar energy facilities being built on class 1 and 2
1015 agricultural soils. '22

1016 We encourage that publicly owned lands, brownfields, rooftops, parking lots and urban
1017 areas be utilized to assist with the clean energy mandate in lieu of farmland. '22

1018 Commercial energy facilities should have appropriate riparian buffer and setback
1019 requirements. '19

1020 Topsoil shall not be removed or stockpiled from the parcel of a solar project. '24

1021 We oppose using the definition of agrivoltaics as agriculture to circumvent the terms of
1022 preservation easements, agricultural preservation zones, or county planning and zoning
1023 authority. '25

1024 If a solar developer includes pollinator habitats in their construction plan, the Maryland
1025 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) should be tasked with assuring that this practice is
1026 installed, developed and maintained to DNR Pollinator Habitat Management Program standards
1027 for the life of the solar site. '25

Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces

1029 Outdoor wood fired boilers/furnaces that utilize approved emission control systems and
1030 EPA best burn practices for Hydronic heaters should be allowed. '19

Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS)

1032 We support an additional carve-out in the Maryland RPS for poultry litter and livestock
1033 manure to energy generation. '19

1034 We oppose any % increase to the RPS if it causes an increase to the electric rates of the
1035 consumer. '19

1036 We oppose any additional increases to the solar carve out in the RPS unless projects are
1037 two megawatts or smaller. '19

ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING

1040 We urge changes to "standing law" so that no farmer who is in compliance with
1041 applicable law could be sued by a third party. '12

EQUINE INDUSTRY

1044 We support the inclusion of inventories of the various classes of equine in the state in
1045 future MDA and NASS agriculture statistical surveys. '18

1046 We support the recognition of equine as part of the agricultural industry and not as
1047 companion animals. Riding lessons, boarding, or training given on a farm, and pleasure horses
1048 should be considered a part of the normal agriculture practices. We support measures to
1049 improve the Maryland Bred Program within the Thoroughbred and Standardbred Industry. '18

1050 We support the creation of state debt to fund the Maryland Horse Park.

1051 We support the creation of incentives to horse owners to work with the Ag agencies
1052 that offer technical assistance for implementing conservation and best management practices.
1053 '18

FAMILY VALUES

1056 We recommend that the Maryland legislature and the Governor should: (1) Pass
1057 legislation to make parents fully accountable for the destructive action of their children under
1058 the age of 18; and (2) Have the party involved fully monetarily liable for the destructive action
1059 they cause. If they are financially unable to pay, they should do so through community service.
1060 The monetary amount should be determined and paid in full. '15

FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES

1063 We recommend that the State FSA Administration grant more power to the county
1064 committees to adequately staff county offices. '25

1065 We recommend more farmer input on FSA office closures before any implementation
1066 occurs. '25
1067 We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and
1068 consolidation of offices and services. '25
1069

FOOD SYSTEMS

1071 We support:

- 1072 (1) The State providing funding to organizations for the sourcing and purchasing of
1073 Maryland grown food products. '25
- 1074 (2) The Maryland Food Donation Program tax credit and support its expansion. '25
- 1075 (3) Technical and monetary assistance being given to farmers to help facilitate and
1076 streamline the requirements to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
1077 (SNAP), Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Maryland Market Money
1078 (MMM) benefits. '25
- 1079 (4) The use of technology to modernize and accelerate redemption and payment to
1080 farmers. '25

1081 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

1082 We support:

- 1083 (1) The program in its effort to help those eligible and in need and believe that an effort
1084 should be made to curb abuse and promote nutritional health. '25
- 1085 (2) Efforts to increase purchases of meats, dairy products, fruit and vegetables. '25
- 1086 (3) The continued efforts to utilize SNAP at farmers markets, farm stands, Community
1087 Supported Agriculture (CSA) and other retail farm markets. '25

1088 We oppose:

- 1089 (1) Utilizing SNAP for cash back purposes. '25

1090 Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

1091 We support:

- 1092 (1) These programs being limited to farmers markets, farm stands, CSA's and other
1093 retail farm markets. '25
- 1094 (2) These programs for the purchase of fresh fruit, vegetables, cut herbs and honey. '25

1095 Maryland Market Money (MMM)

1096 We support:

- 1097 (1) MMM being used to match SNAP and FMNP dollars spent at participating farmers
1098 markets, farm stands, CSA's and other retail farm markets. '25
- 1099 (2) MMM being used to purchase fresh fruit, vegetables, meats, eggs, honey, dairy
1100 products, and value-added products. '25
- 1101 (3) MMM being housed in Maryland Department of Agriculture. '25
- 1102 (4) The continued and enhanced funding of the MMM program. '25

FORESTRY

1104 **Forest Conservation**

1105 We oppose any new publicly funded afforestation projects in Maryland that does not
1106 include a plan for the following: wildlife control, noxious weed control, and forest management.
1107
1108 '21

1109 We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with
1110 regards to the harvesting of trees. '21

1111 Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural
1112 lands under the state of Maryland's conservation or land use programs. '21

1113 **Timber Harvesting**

1114 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1115 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest
1116 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1117 basis. '07

1118 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state
1119 and county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1120 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '12

1121 No conservation easement should prohibit timber harvest. '14

1122 We oppose time of year timber harvesting restrictions. '24

1123 **GAMBLING**

1124 We support that a portion of gaming proceeds continue to be utilized to supplement the
1125 purse and bred fund accounts. We support licensed video gaming and gambling at racetracks
1126 and/or other facilities and that a minimum of 25% of the total net revenue from these sources
1127 be used to supplement the purse and Maryland Bred Fund accounts to equal the average dollar
1128 value of the three highest states in the Purse and Breeding bonus accounts. Any expansion into
1129 other forms of gambling including but not limited to table games, sports wagering, Video
1130 Lottery Terminals (VLTs), Historical Horse Racing (HHR), and iGaming should benefit the equine
1131 industry, Maryland Ag Fair Board, MAEF, and agricultural education programs. '24

1132 **GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS**

1133 We support the production and use of GMO products. We encourage the education of
1134 government officials and the public on the product safety, economic benefits, and
1135 environmental benefits of GMOs. '24

1136 We oppose legislation that would restrict the use of GMO commodities grown in the
1137 state. '24

1138 We support GMO policy decisions only at the federal government level and not at the
1139 state, county, and local government level. '24

1140 We oppose state mandated labeling of products made with GMO crops. '24

1141 **GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS – STATE GOVERNMENT**

1142 **Elected Officials**

1143 We support a constitutional change to elect one senator per county. '19

1144 We support a House of Delegates apportioned on population with a minimum of one
1145 delegate per county. '19

1146 We oppose any method of selection for Clerks of the Court, Register of Wills, and Judges
1147 of the Orphans Court, other than election by the people. '19

1148 We urge local control in the selections of those responsible for operating our local court
1149 systems. '19

1150 **Ethics**

1151 We support a change in current State law to allow farmers to become eligible for
1152 employment by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '19

1156 **Government Spending**

1157 We support programs and funding intended to ensure the most vulnerable among us
1158 have access to healthy, affordable, and local food. '22

1159 We urge the reduction of government agency bureaucracy and duplication to reduce
1160 costs, fees and frustration of the general public. '19

1161 We urge all levels of government to operate within a balanced budget. '19

1162 We oppose any state food policy that limits, impairs, restricts, or bans the purchase of
1163 agricultural commodities produced in Maryland by State or Local agencies and institutions. '19

1164 We encourage State and Local agencies and institutions to focus on purchasing
1165 Maryland agricultural commodities and products. '24

1166 We support a state emergency relief fund to be administered directly to livestock and
1167 poultry growers, including contract growers, in the event of an animal disease outbreak
1168 resulting in production setbacks. '22

1169 **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

1170 We strongly oppose consolidation or transfer of any of MDA's current programs,
1171 functions, or authorities to any other department. We strongly support the transfer of all ag-
1172 related programs, functions, and authorities from other departments to MDA. '19

1173 We urge the MDA to establish official standardized office hours for all department
1174 offices including field offices. '19

1175 **Regulatory Reform**

1176 We strongly recommend that any new policy or regulation proposed affecting land
1177 management, nutrient management, environmental programs, or enforcement be required to
1178 include an economic impact study to evaluate the effect on vested persons. This shall be
1179 performed as part of the developmental process for each regulation and policy. '19

1180 We strongly recommend that the farm community continue to be consulted and be
1181 allowed to participate in the formulation of regulations and laws at all levels of government
1182 particularly when they adversely impact the Ag community. '19

1183 Agencies developing regulations should seek additional input from agricultural
1184 stakeholders. '19

1185 We strongly recommend all government agencies develop regulations in cooperation
1186 with other agencies so that there is a reduction in duplication and a consistency of purpose. '19

1187 We ask for removal of the question on Maryland's death certificate in bold print, "Did
1188 tobacco use contribute to the cause of death, YES { } NO { } UNCERTAIN { }?" '19

1189 Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said
1190 regulations. '19

1191 We strongly recommend that all State agencies review their rules and regulations that
1192 affect the agriculture industry and modify and/or eliminate those that are outdated or serve no
1193 purpose. '19

1194 Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and
1195 scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry
1196 industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All
1197 regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis. '19

1198 The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR)
1199 Committee should have the authority to prevent a proposed regulation from being
1200 implemented. The Committee should be able to refer controversial proposals to the full
1201 General Assembly for a vote or for amendment before an agency can implement the proposed
1202 regulation. '19

1203 We discourage passage of any law or regulation concerning Maryland agriculture
1204 products or processes, which would not apply to products or processes from other states or
1205 countries. Thereby not putting Maryland farmers at a competitive disadvantage. '23

1206 **State and Local Agencies**

1207 We support mental health programs and services to the Agricultural Community that
1208 provide education and information on where to obtain mental health services. '19

1209 We support the co-location of Ag agencies, Ag education and resources in regional Ag
1210 centers when feasible. '19

1211 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '19

1212 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
1213 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the
1214 Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict
1215 the access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on
1216 private property to no greater than law enforcement agencies. '19

1217 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
1218 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
1219 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate
1220 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
1221 practices. '19

1222 **State-Owned Farmland**

1223 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
1224 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
1225 converted to conservation uses. '19

1226 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

1227 Considering the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension
1228 program to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the
1229 present state pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '19

1231 **GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

1232 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We
1233 recognize the value of urban greenways but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural
1234 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with
1235 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or
1236 rails to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that
1237 adjoins the proposed greenway before a study commences. '25

1238 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any
1239 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the
1240 opportunity for input. Also, the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail
1241 use on the safety, health, security, privacy, and economic interests of the adjacent landowners
1242 and determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail
1243 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,
1244 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use
1245 of the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for
1246 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers. '25

1247 A comprehensive title examination of the underlying railway shall be required to
1248 confirm that the public entity possesses clear, conclusive, and indisputable title to the property
1249 interest, with all costs associated with such examination borne by the applicant. '25

INSURANCE

Crop Insurance

We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. '07

Health Insurance & Medical Costs

Health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-employed individuals. '13

We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated health insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits to better manage health insurance costs. '05

We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of quality health care. '13

We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.'06

We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits to long-term care insurance. '10

Insurance Rates

We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on experience ratings. '05

We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry because of claims that are considered “Act of God” incidents. '16

We strongly oppose the increase of unemployment insurance rates to pay for the unemployment due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We support repaying the unemployment insurance trust fund with federal COVID funding. '21

INVASIVE PEST CONTROL

We recommend that the state gypsy moth control program be maintained at a 250 egg masses per acre baseline. '18

We strongly urge the state to develop a Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) education and integrated pest management (IPM) control program; and effectively communicate it to the public in order to suppress the SLF populations to levels below economic damaging thresholds. We also urge the state to take necessary measures to remove the SLF preferred host plant; Ailanthus, also known as the tree of heaven. '24

We recommend Maryland DNR to list Sika Deer (*Cervces Nippon*) as an invasive species.

We urge funding for research and control of the New World Screwworm. '25

JOHNE'S DISEASE

We acknowledge that progress has been made with the Johne's Disease program and request that the Maryland Department of Agriculture provide continued support for it. '23

LABOR STANDARDS

We support labor policies that ensure Maryland agriculture has a legal, stable supply of workers, for both seasonal and year-long employment in all types of agriculture. '24

1296 We support equitable enforcement of and compliance with laws affecting agricultural
1297 labor. A sound agricultural labor relations program emphasizing the realities, importance and
1298 dignity of agricultural workers should be promoted. '24

1299 We support requiring that Department of Labor (DOL) employees notify farm
1300 owner/operators upon their arrival and prior to any inspection or questioning of employees. '24

1301 We support the right of farm workers to decline union membership based on their own
1302 convictions. '24

1303 We support legislation that would prohibit strikes in agriculture or in an agricultural
1304 processing plant during a critical period of production and/or harvest. '24

1305 We support the passage of legislation to exempt agriculture workers and point of sale
1306 workers in agriculture from minimum wage increase requirements. '20

1307 We oppose union organizers from being able to access private property without the
1308 owner's consent. '24

1309 We oppose mandatory overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours
1310 per week. '24

1311 We oppose mandatory farm worker contracts. '24

1312 We oppose any effort to change age restrictions in current farm labor. '24

1313 Heat Standards

1314 We support a heat stress standard exemption for agriculture. '25

1315 **Seasonal Workforce**

1316 We support an adequate supply of authorized temporary seasonal agricultural workers.
1317 '24

1318 We support the current H-2A program, in addition to any new agricultural visa program
1319 established, while seeking its modernization and improved efficiency. It needs to be an
1320 uncapped visa program that is open to all segments of agriculture and flexible enough to
1321 provide for the differing needs of farmers to include a year-round program. '24

1322 We support streamlining the H-2A and H-2B process. '24

1323 We support improved training for employers to understand and better use the H-2A
1324 program and provide better information for new users of the program. '24

1325 We support elimination of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR). Until then, we support
1326 legislation that would cap year-over-year increases. '24

1327 We support maximum transparency in the investigation practices by DOL; including but
1328 not limited to full disclosure of DOL policies, guidelines, and operating procedures. '24

1329 We oppose fees on the H-2A program that provide funding for program unrelated to
1330 guest worker visas. '24

1331 We oppose requiring farmers who participate in federal guestworker programs to pay
1332 wage rates excessively higher than the state or federal minimum wage. '24

1333 We oppose applying any labor law that does not currently apply to an H-2A visa worker.
1334 '24

1335 **Workers' Compensation**

1336 We support allowing farm employers to continue to provide workers' compensation
1337 coverage on a voluntary basis for family members and farm workers regardless of annual
1338 wages. '24

1339 We support changes in workers' compensation laws which will help reduce premium
1340 rates for employers. '24

1341 We support fair regulations allowing a business to self-insure. '24

1342 We support limits on the amount of compensation an injured worker may receive. '24

1343 We support strong penalties for abuses of workers' compensation benefits. '24
1344 We oppose requiring employers to participate in a state-operated workers'
1345 compensation plan. '24
1346 We oppose changes in workers' compensation policies or laws that increase costs to
1347 agricultural employers and have a negative impact on existing jobs and job creation.'24
1348 **Youth Employment**
1349 We support maximum opportunities for youth to work on farms. We believe youth gain
1350 important life skills, learn safety around animals and equipment, benefit from involvement in
1351 programs like 4-H and FFA, become interested in careers in agriculture, better understand that
1352 farmers are professionals and use best management practices, and establish a strong work
1353 ethic. Therefore, we urge government not to limit these opportunities. '24
1354

LAND STEWARDSHIP

1355 Realizing that stewardship of the earth is in the public interest, we support the
1356 recognition of agriculture as a proper and environmentally sound use of our land resources. '06
1357
1358

LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING

1359 **Annexation**
1360 Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations
1361 within the county. '22
1362

1363 **Growth Management**
1364 We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations
1365 within our state. '22
1366 We oppose any state policy that overrides county planning and zoning authority. '22
1367 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.
1368 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural
1369 counties. '22

1370 Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's
1371 property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '22
1372 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).
1373 '22

1374 **Foreign Investment**
1375 Foreign investment in Maryland assets is a concern. The impact of foreign investment in
1376 agriculture, banking, insurance, and other business institutions in the United States should be
1377 monitored. '23
1378 Foreign government ownership of utility companies and natural resource businesses,
1379 including agricultural land, should be limited to less than a controlling interest. We oppose
1380 preferential treatment of foreign investments in agriculture and insist that foreign investors be
1381 required to conform to the same tax laws, import and export regulations as American
1382 producers. '23

1383 **Permitting**
1384 We support the exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building permits,
1385 storm water management regulation, and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the
1386 zoning code. We further support the inclusion of specific language in the building code to
1387 permit public access to existing, structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated
1388 upgrades to the full current codes. '22

1389 **Zoning**

1390 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their
1391 efforts to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners
1392 involved should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria
1393 changes. Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall
1394 provide for just compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no downzoning on
1395 agriculture land. '22

1396 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '22

1397 Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or
1398 default. '22

1399

1400 **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

1401 **Penalties & Confinement**

1402 We urge the state to increase penalties for defacing and removal of "Mason-Dixon Line"
1403 markers. '05

1404 We favor adequate prison facilities so that inmates can serve their sentences. We
1405 recommend that inmates in minimum security penal complexes be required to work on
1406 highways, prison farms or other public projects to help defray the cost of their food and
1407 support and to pay restitution to their victims. We also favor emphasis on the rehabilitation of
1408 persons confined to penal institutions to afford them a better opportunity to assume a
1409 constructive role in society. '06

1410 We believe that the State of Maryland should enact legislation providing for a
1411 mandatory life sentence without parole, or a death sentence, for violent murder offenses and
1412 murder offenses occurring during the illegal transportation and/or distribution of controlled
1413 dangerous substances (drugs). '05

1414 We urge the Department of Corrections to return prisoners to their county of origin
1415 after the completion of their sentence before their release.'07

1416 We support legislation that would prevent elected officials from holding office if
1417 convicted of a crime or of misconduct in office and from receiving pensions or benefits
1418 pertaining to the office that they held.'06

1419 **Judicial Process**

1420 We recommend that the defendants be brought to a speedy trial and if convicted, given
1421 a sentence sufficient to discourage further crimes. We support consistency in judicial
1422 sentencing for all.'07

1423 We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity
1424 defense of "innocent by reason of insanity" to "guilty, but insane." '05

1425 **Investigation of Crimes**

1426 We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between
1427 jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. '07

1428 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who
1429 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.'06

1430 To deter copper thefts, we propose a mandatory waiting period between the sale and
1431 the payment for certain salvaged material. '11

1432 We support increasing the penalties for, and the efforts to investigate and prosecute,
1433 agriculture and aquaculture related crimes including, but not limited to, dumping of residential
1434 and commercial trash and waste materials on private property. '21

1435 We support maintaining adequate police force funding to fully meet the

1436 needs of rural communities and agricultural producers. '20

1437

1438 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

1439 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law
1440 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

1441

1442 **LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS**

1443 The State of Maryland should institute policy whereby unsuccessful plaintiffs initiating
1444 litigation against farm and forest operations in Maryland shall be liable for the defendant's legal
1445 fees and appropriate damages if the defendant prevails in the course of the suit '23

1446 We oppose landowners, producers, or their lenders being held liable for the cost of
1447 chemical contaminants remediation, caused by application as a passive receiver without
1448 disclosure or other factors outside their control. '23

1449 **Contributory Negligence**

1450 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock
1451 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a
1452 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's
1453 responsible actions. '23

1454 **Agricultural Immunity**

1455 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '23

1456 We support immunity from liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers to afford
1457 the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '23

1458

1459 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

1460 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public
1461 monies.'06

1462

1463 **LOCAL/TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

1464 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08

1465 We support the State of Maryland increasing funding to the Tri-County Councils for the
1466 purpose of including and funding agricultural and natural resources development in their
1467 mission. '20

1468

1469 **MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

1470 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow hemp as an agricultural crop. '19

1471 We support increasing the legal THC content of industrial hemp to one percent. '22

1472

1473 **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

1474 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the
1475 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as
1476 necessary, including the purchase of needed equipment. '15

1477

1478 **NONTIDAL WETLANDS**

1479 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should
1480 be deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly
1481 compensated." '22

1482 We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that
1483 they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of
1484 public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost
1485 of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. '22
1486

NOXIOUS WEEDS

1488 We support that all noxious weeds to be controlled on construction sites. '25

1489 We support requiring that wildflower seeds for pollinator plots be free of noxious
1490 weeds. '25

Noxious Weed List

1492 We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, Rosa
1493 multiflora (multi-flora rose) (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry),
1494 Microstegium vimineum (Japanese stilt grass), Amaranthus palmeri (Palmer Amaranth), Asiatic
1495 tearthumb (mile-a-minute vine or kudzu), Celastrus orbiculatus (Asiatic bittersweet vine), ~~and~~
1496 Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven) and Cirsium Arvense (Canada Thistle) placed on the noxious weed
1497 list. '25

1498 We urge the SHA to submit a realistic fiscal impact statement related to adding palmer
1499 amaranth to the noxious weed list. '18

Compliance on Government-Owned Land and Private Land Under Government Contract

1501 We insist that local, county, state, federal governments, and public utilities control
1502 invasive species and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by
1503 them. '18

1504 We urge FSA and NRCS to educate private landowners about invasive species of weeds
1505 and control methods before and during the contract period. '18

Enforcement

1507 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the
1508 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,
1509 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's
1510 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '18

1511 We recommend increasing the funding to provide proper enforcement of the noxious
1512 weed law and maintain a viable education, prevention, and treatment program. '18

1513 We recommend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators
1514 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are
1515 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1516 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1517 non-crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all the control methods outlined by the
1518 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '18

1519 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1520 conservation programs, so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1521 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '18

1522 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop procedures for adding
1523 new weeds to the noxious weed list. These procedures should include an estimate of the cost
1524 to control the weed. '18

Public Education

1526 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1527 public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of noxious weeds. '18

1528 **Weed Control Methods**

1529 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1530 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and
1531 eliminate these noxious weeds. '18

1532 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious
1533 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will
1534 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination. '18

1535 We support the state providing cost share for control of noxious weeds and other weeds
1536 of concern. '18

1537 We support counties and the state to work with HOAs, Forest Conservation Easements
1538 and Storm Water Management Areas to control their noxious weeds and weeds of concern. '18

1539 **Weeds of Concern**

1540 We urge MDA in cooperation with University of Maryland Extension to create a weeds
1541 of concern program that identifies new or herbicide resistant weeds of concern, educates state
1542 agencies, landowners, and farmers on how to identify and manage these weeds, and
1543 encourages state agencies, landowners and farmers to implement best management practices
1544 to control these weeds. '18

1545
1546 **NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**

1547 **Nutrient Management for Farms**

1548 We support nutrient management programs and that all farmers should apply nutrients
1549 in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound science. '21

1550 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of
1551 nutrient management plans. '09

1552 We support a nutrient management program that: (1) produces real water quality
1553 improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3) requires reasonable recordkeeping,
1554 (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5) provides adequate flexibility for
1555 farmers to properly manage their operations, (6) provides appropriate inspection and
1556 enforcement, and (7) provides appropriate incentives to offset operating and capital costs
1557 incurred by complying with the requirements of the program. '12

1558 We are opposed to the changes to the nutrient management regulations, which make
1559 MD agriculture less competitive by increasing the cost and difficulty of farming in Maryland
1560 without compensation. '13

1561 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.
1562 '10

1563 We recommend that MDA and the University of Maryland review and update the
1564 nitrogen use recommendations in UMD's Numan Pro software program, which is used for
1565 nutrient management plans. '18

1566 We recommend the composting of animals be an approved method of disposing of
1567 animal mortalities on the farm. '17

1568 We oppose expanding the Phosphorus Management Tool beyond the current
1569 implementation. '21

1570 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient
1571 management program to achieve the following:

1572 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05

1573 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.
1574 '05

1575 c. Prevent yield capping. '05
1576 d. We encourage the leveraging use of production methods and scientific nutrient
1577 recommendations from all US land-grant universities to make Maryland's Nutrient
1578 Management Planning more efficient '23
1579 e. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12
1580 f. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on
1581 an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14
1582 g. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and
1583 technologies. '18
1584 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a
1585 farm based on a complaint. '09
1586 We support the optional on-line reporting system for Annual Implementation Reports
1587 (AIRs) but oppose that being the only option. '21
1588 We oppose increasing the nutrient application setback from tidal waters beyond 25
1589 feet. '25

Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality

1591 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain
1592 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately written nutrient
1593 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government
1594 entity. '10

1595 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date, they should
1596 be properly destroyed. '08

Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education

1598 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1599 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '13

Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery

1601 We support permanent funding for the University of Maryland Extension Nutrient
1602 Management Program in order to hire and maintain adequate, permanent nutrient
1603 management advisors to provide nutrient management education and plan development. '23
1604 *(Kent, As Amended)*

1605 All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '23

MAFO/CAFO Permits

1607 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1608 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1609 We strongly oppose the Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised
1610 Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by MDE. '12

1611 We oppose public hearings for CAFO permit renewals that do not include facility
1612 expansion or modification. '16

1613 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1614 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1615 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '11

1616 We strongly oppose any fee structure for reviewing or inspecting MAFO or CAFO
1617 operation by MDE. '14

1618 We support transferring the MAFO permitting program from MDE to MDA while
1619 decoupling the NPDES permitting process from the MAFO permit. '17

1620 We oppose air quality monitoring as a requirement for MAFO/CAFO permits. '21

1621 Under the current CAFO permitting structure, we support timely submission of the
1622 CAFO permit by MDE to EPA for review and renewal. '25

1623 We support regulations and laws which allow for coverage during the interim between
1624 the permit expiration and renewal by EPA. '25

1625 Manure and Litter Management

1626 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for
1627 crop production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '20

1628 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.
1629 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies – beyond those previously conducted by
1630 UMD researchers – that include different soil types, locations, and manure types before any
1631 ban on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1632 Universities within the Bay Watershed should collaboratively research the benefits of
1633 organic nutrients vs. commercial fertilizer on leachable soil types and soils with high water
1634 tables. '13

1635 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1636 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1637 We support diversion of manure from equine operations from going to county landfills.

1638 We encourage government funding of composting facilities. '18

1639 We oppose being required to field stack mushroom soil compost. '18

1640 We support adequate funding of the Manure Transport Program to assist with transport
1641 and movement of livestock manure and poultry litter to all parts of the State. '21

1642 Soil Testing

1643 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1644 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '13

1646 NUTRIENT/CARBON TRADING

1647 We oppose government-mandated carbon sequestration or credit trading. '21

1648 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient and carbon reduction on both farms and
1649 forests that allow farmers and/or landowners to receive fair compensation for nutrient removal
1650 and/or carbon reductions. '21

1651 We support allowing Shellfish/Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for
1652 Maryland to meet its water quality goals. '16

1653 We oppose using the wastewater treatment plant's portion of the flush tax dollars to
1654 jump start a Maryland nutrient trading program. '16

1656 POULTRY INDUSTRY

1657 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter.
1658 '17

1659 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a
1660 cost-share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the
1661 mandatory covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '17

1662 We oppose any effort to mandate moving poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '17

1663 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy
1664 generation. '17

1665 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1666 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere
1667 in the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '17

1668 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research-based guidelines for field
1669 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1670 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '17

1671 We oppose government regulations that would require chicken grower/poultry
1672 company layout policies. '17

1673 We support Delmarva Chicken Association's (DCA) best management practices for good
1674 neighbor relations, which cover house location on property, manure handling practices, carcass
1675 disposal system, vegetative buffers, odor prevention & control, and contact with neighbors. '21

1676 We oppose state mandated air quality monitoring or air filtering on poultry houses over
1677 and above DCA's best management practices for good neighbor relations. '21

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

1680 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1681 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner. '23

1682 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production
1683 of an agricultural commodity on farmland. '23

1684 We oppose any mandatory retirement of land for buffers and setbacks. '23

1685 Government action that diminishes a property's value or an owner's right to use his
1686 property constitutes a taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should
1687 provide due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been
1688 diminished. The just basis for compensation must be at least fair market value. '23

1689 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and
1690 state levels. '23

1691 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the
1692 party disputing any property lines. '23

1693 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to
1694 notify all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified
1695 letter, in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '23

1696 We oppose the Open Fields Doctrine. '24

Eminent Domain

1697 We believe the Supreme Court "Kelo" decision violates the basic principles and
1698 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1699 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1700 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We
1701 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and
1702 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of
1703 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1704 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop.
1705 '23

1706 We urge the elimination of the "quick take" condemnation process. '23

1707 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1708 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1709 property. '23

1710 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.
1711 '23

1712 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for
1713 the purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original

1715 landowner or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other
1716 than for which it was originally acquired. '23

1717 We urge that the compensation must include the total devaluation of the farm due to
1718 the negative impact, including visual, of any eminent domain project. '23

1719 We support compensation for business losses, not just land values when a farm
1720 operation is affected by eminent domain. '25

1721

PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS

1722 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1723 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of land being purchased in this
1724 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1725 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1726 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to
1727 use part or all their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1728 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1729 '21

1730 We urge Program Open Space revenues that were diverted to the General Fund to be
1731 repaid. We support using a portion of these repaid funds to be used to increase wildlife
1732 management in the state. This could include state cost share for vegetative fencing/sacrificial
1733 crops and wildlife fencing. '21

1734 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1735 present state-owned land rather than the acquisition of new land. '21

1736 We urge diverting a portion of the open space funds to be used for managing wildlife on
1737 state owned land. '21

1738 We urge that the open space program continue to receive 0.5% of the Maryland real
1739 estate transfer tax. '21

1740

PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS

1741 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1742 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding. '07

1743 Also, we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property
1744 owners of the easement rights of the PDA. '06

1745 We oppose any effort to usurp control of PDA maintenance from the PDA managers.
1746 Any federal, state, or private conservation practices should not prevent, hinder, or interfere
1747 with the maintenance of the PDA main, tributary, or right of way. '18

1748

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

1749 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1750 present to the public of the state. We urge the State and County health departments to gather
1751 as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs, and treatment of
1752 these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information. '06

1753 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1754 problem to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state. '06

1755 We urge funding for research by the University of Maryland on all tick species to reduce
1756 the incidence of the disease they transmit and carry. '23

1757 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1758 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

PUBLIC OWNED LAND

Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '18

We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by willing sellers only. '18

In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges, and wild lands to determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate the sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '18

The state should compensate counties for the loss of property tax revenue on public lands. '18

We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or other recreational uses to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and administering these lands. '18

We urge the state to require and implement a wildlife management plan for all public, wild and forest land. '18

Timberland Management

We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '18

PUBLIC RELATIONS

American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome, and most affordable food in the world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the media unless substantiated and accurate. '24

We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues. Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors, and subsequent retailers. '24

We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and information regarding the local farm community. '24

We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland agriculture to the public through various media outlets. '24

We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that would continue to:

1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the environment.
4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals, and educational displays.
5. Include a speaker's bureau '24

We encourage state, county, and local government officials to take a more active role in supporting, promoting, and defending agriculture.'24

RAILROADS

1809
1810 Where economically feasible, we urge the state government to take whatever action
1811 necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade them where necessary, including
1812 adequate safety devices at crossings. '25

1813 We urge the state government to require private railroads to maintain existing rail
1814 services and to upgrade them where necessary including adequate safety devices at crossings
1815 for public safety. '25

RECYCLING

1817 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury
1818 to animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that
1819 would require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we
1820 recommend that a sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for
1821 recycling. '13

1822 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we
1823 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics.'07

1824 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '16

1825 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials,
1826 as well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

Tire Fund & Tire Recycling

1828 The state Tire Fund collection program should be expanded to include a program that
1829 would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state annually. '16

RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS

1832 When an utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be
1833 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.
1834 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be
1835 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary because of building waterways,
1836 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground and that the
1837 areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars, and weeds, and
1838 noxious weeds by the utility company.'24

1839 We support reimbursement to farm owners/operators for crop loss, soil compaction,
1840 business loss, and other expenses due to maintenance, installation, upgrades and any other
1841 activities. '24

1842 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights-of-way or property lines for
1843 any and all projects.-'24

1844 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used
1845 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the
1846 underlying property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be
1847 returned to adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee
1848 simple, the property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first
1849 refusal upon abandonment. '24

1850 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail
1851 use, and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will
1852 preserve the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. '09

1853 We oppose the taking of additional "Right of Way" to add "Bicycle" lanes to county or
1854 state highways. '24

We oppose any new utility easements through prime and productive farmland, as well as through preserved ag land. '24

We support the return of the soil profile to its original state, as determined by the U.S. Soil Conservation District. '24

We oppose any further fragmentation of farmland for the development of electric transmission lines, data centers and distribution hubs. '24

Landowners should have the option to lease versus sell right-of-way easements for transmission lines. '25

RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS

We believe in and support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms. '15

We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by law-abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, long arm, autoloader, or manual loader. We oppose any additional expansion of taxes or new taxation of firearms, ammunition or reloading equipment and supplies. '25

We oppose limiting or restricting the purchase or possession of ammunition and the implementation of any type of ammunition tracking; and background checks for the purchase of firearm ammunition. '25

RIGHT-TO-FARM

To maintain the right to farm, we recognize our individual responsibility as farmers to help maintain the positive image of the ag industry by being respectful and courteous neighbors. '20

We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal production practices and agritourism activities. '22

We recognize the efforts of the Maryland “Right-to-Farm” Law and recommend that it should be strengthened to protect and promote the enhancement of all commodities. ’20

We support an amendment to Maryland's Constitution recognizing that agriculture, which provides food, energy, health benefits, and security, is the foundation and stabilizing force of Maryland's economy. To protect this vital sector of Maryland's economy, the right of farmers to engage in farming practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state. '20

Recognizing that agriculture is an essential industry, we recommend that right-to-farm laws extend to the ag-supported industry and supply chain. '20

Before entering the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review to settle the nuisance complaint between the affected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in nuisance complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '20

Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '20

We support an amendment to the definition of a "commercial fishing or seafood operation" in the Right to Farm law to include the word "growing." '20

1900 We oppose any state or local law or ordinance that regulates ownership and usage of
1901 machinery deemed useful in agricultural production and farm maintenance solely based upon
1902 any nuisance or environmental policy, to include noise, or gas and diesel engine emissions. '24
1903

Funding to Protect Farms

1904 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1905 environmental suits filed against farmers. '20

Lemon Law

1907 We support the state of Maryland implementing a lemon law for ag equipment. '24
1908

RIPARIAN BUFFERS

1910 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis. '22

1911 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1912 use. '22

1913 We oppose unpaid or mandatory buffers on any fields borders, or old field ditches
1914 running through woods. '24

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

Road Design

1918 We suggest the State and County Highway Administration study newly widened as well
1919 as existing roads and correct any dangerous conditions created by landowners placing objects
1920 too close to the roadway. (For example: steel objects, reflectors, ornamental fences, or trees).
1921 '07

1922 We recommend that the State Highway Administration and county roads departments
1923 consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture when designing islands or the placement of
1924 road signs and mailboxes so that they do not prohibit or make difficult the passage of farm
1925 machinery. (For example, signs or mailboxes should not be placed directly opposite each other
1926 on both sides of the road. Staggering signs and mailboxes on either side of a roadway provides
1927 more room for the passage of very large equipment.) We suggest that batteries of mailboxes
1928 be used where possible and placed off the main road in new developments. '08

1929 We urge the State Highway Administration to improve access for farm equipment at the
1930 signalized intersections on Maryland highways. '06

1931 We urge the Department of Transportation to review the use of traffic circles on state
1932 highways to identify problems involved with moving farm equipment around the circles and
1933 through the intersection and to establish guidelines to solve the problems. '09

1934 We believe that land involved in highway interchanges should be properly designed and
1935 landscaped so that it is free of sight obstructions, attractive and easily maintained. We
1936 encourage the state to plant buffers on state property, including state highways on/off ramps
1937 and median strips and maintain them following the same requirements placed on CREP areas.
1938 '05

1939 No curbing should be placed on rural roads with less than 13 feet from the centerline to
1940 the curb. '07

1941 We support that the Maryland State Highway Administration require state highway
1942 entrances at commercial energy sites comply with the Maryland Department of Transportation,
1943 State Highway Administration Access Manual. '25

Road Construction

1945 An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We
1946 urge that a highway system, including adequate bridges, be built and maintained, to provide for

1947 the movement of goods and produce throughout the state. However, due to the high cost of
1948 highway construction, we recommend, where feasible, that existing roads and bridges be
1949 upgraded and improved instead of building new roads along different routes.'07

1950 We recommend that existing bridges be widened, and new bridges be constructed with
1951 a minimum width of 20 feet, to accommodate safe movement of modern farm equipment.'20

1952 We oppose any additional Chesapeake Bay crossing that is not at the location of the
1953 current Bay Bridge spans. '19

1954 We encourage the State Highway Administration to install painted islands rather than
1955 concrete islands at intersections wherever feasible. '07

1956 We urge that revenues from the highway fuel taxes be used for highway construction
1957 and maintenance only. '11

1958 We believe that the state's share of the overall operation and maintenance cost of the
1959 mass transit systems should be limited to 25%, with 75% coming from the users and the local
1960 jurisdiction served by the system. '14

1961 We urge the counties and state to enforce the law requiring anyone working along our
1962 roads to provide safety devices and personnel to ensure safe travel, as does the State Highway
1963 Department. '07

1964 We urge the State Highway Administration and counties to proceed with urgently
1965 needed road construction projects as rural roads need to be maintained to a higher standard
1966 for the safety of our farmers and our residents. '22

1967 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project
1968 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land
1969 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has
1970 been initiated. '08

1971 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)

1973 We urge a change in the law to mandate the trimming of tree limbs on both new growth
1974 and existing trees for safe travel of all vehicles on roadways. '11

1975 We support state legislation that requires, on both state and county roads, trees and
1976 brush be maintained at a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge and to a clearance of at
1977 least 18 feet across the full maintenance width of all public roads. Further, we recommend the
1978 placement of new poles and guide wires at a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge, with
1979 reflective material placed thereon. '22

1980 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1981 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and enhance scenic views.'12

1982 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments control invasive species
1983 and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '17

1984 The government should increase the level of maintenance to ensure safe passage of
1985 vehicles.'12

1986 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1987 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of
1988 the tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous, and diseased
1989 trees.'12

1990 We highly recommend that State Highway Administration (SHA) send at least a 6-month
1991 notice to adjacent landowners whenever plantings are being proposed along SHA rights-of-way
1992 that are currently in agricultural production. '15

1993 We urge the State Highway Administration to accommodate the movement of farm
1994 equipment into fields in agricultural production when installing right of way projects. '17
1995 We strongly encourage SHA to continue to allow farming on these rights-of-way and
1996 work with farmers to find other suitable sites for plantings on adjacent land. '15
1997 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1998 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the
1999 trimming and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and
2000 simplify the permit process. '10

2001

RURAL COMMUNITIES

2002 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was created
2003 to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13

2004 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
2005 county governments during the legislative session. '13

2006 We strongly support legislation defining rural broadband/internet as a public necessity.
2007
2008 '20

2009

RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM

2010 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
2011 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
2012 Preservation Program.'06

2013 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
2014 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
2015 '07

2016

SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

School Standards

2017 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
2018 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
2019 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all
2020 and should be enforced by the school system. '07

2021 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

2022 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging
2023 in illegal drug activity. '07

School Meals & Farm to School Initiatives

2024 We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote Farm to School
2025 programs and the purchase of Maryland grown products.

2026 We support:

- 2027 (1) The funding of the Maryland Farm to School Meal program. '25
- 2028 (2) Farm to School initiatives which encourage the procurement of Maryland grown
2029 foods. '25
- 2030 (3) Educating students about healthy foods and nutrition, promoting school gardens,
2031 and encouraging farm/farmer visits. '25
- 2032 (4) Schools having the ability to prepare and serve these foods in the cafeteria. '25

2037 **School Year**

2038 We oppose a year-round and/or a staggered school year. We encourage all local/county
2039 Boards of Education to develop a calendar that starts after Labor Day and ends no later than
2040 June 15th. '19

2041 **School Attendance Policy**

2042 Participation in agricultural education activities should be allowed as an excused
2043 absence and should not count against the number of allowable absences set by the county
2044 school system in question. '21

2046 **SEAT BELTS**

2047 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other
2048 vehicles. '16

2050 **SEED TESTING**

2051 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a
2052 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider.'11

2053 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from any certified seed lab. '14

2055 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

2056 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate the current regulations
2057 concerning septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue
2058 economic hardship on landowners.'06

2059 We support requiring the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) septic systems in
2060 environmentally sensitive areas where significant impact to the Bay can be demonstrated. '11

2061 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

2062 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished
2063 land value incurred by any septic legislation. '11

2065 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

2066 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
2067 the federal Class A standard. '23

2068 Landowners and producers who passively receive PFAS on their property should not be
2069 held liable for PFAS contamination. '25

2070 We oppose any legislation that would allow biosolids utilized on farmland to be less
2071 restrictive than the standards outlined in MDA's 2012 Nutrient Management Guidelines. While
2072 we recognize that biosolids are an excellent source of natural fertilizer, we believe it should be
2073 utilized under the same standards as farm-produced natural fertilizer. '23

2074 We recommend that MDA classify dissolved air flotation (DAF) from poultry processing
2075 plant effluent as a biosolid. '23

2076 We support continued research and public education into sludge use to assure proper
2077 application rates and practices that protect farmland. '23

2078 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
2079 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability
2080 and potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be
2081 imported into Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '23

2082 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be
2083 held accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
2084 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator. '23

2085 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a
2086 composite test be taken and recorded each day. '23

2087 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
2088 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced. '23

2089 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
2090 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '23

2091 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
2092 that are more restrictive than State standards. '23

2093 We support the collaboration between NRCS, MDE, MES and MDA to ensure all nutrient
2094 management, conservation standards, and regulations are met when applying biosolids. '23

2095 We urge the State of Maryland to follow the US EPA PFAS Strategic Roadmap and adopt
2096 limits for PFAS contamination in agricultural products and inputs only when set by the
2097 respective Federal agency. '24

STATE DESIGNATIONS

2100 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

2101 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts
2102 to change this designation. '07

STRAY VOLTAGE

2103 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies
2104 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and
2105 livestock. '07

2106 We support the study of the effects of electromagnetic fields and stray voltage on
2107 humans, livestock, and equipment and its effects prior to the placement of transmission lines.
2108 '25

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

2109 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that
2110 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

- 2111 1. It must be profitable for farmers. '08
- 2112 2. It must work to conserve soil, water, and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08
- 2113 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08
- 2114 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08
- 2115 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture.
2116 '08
- 2117 6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency.
2118 '10
- 2119 7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic or regenerative farming practices. '19

2120 Regenerative agriculture is defined as any production system that minimizes
2121 environmental impacts, maximizes production and increases the productivity of soil over time.
2122 '24

TAXES

Admission and Amusement Tax

2127
2128 Agritourism activities should be exempt from admission and amusement tax. '22
2129

Capital Gains Tax

2130 We support an exemption from the Maryland capital gains tax on any profit realized
2131 from the sale of a perpetual conservation easement. '22
2132

Estate Tax

2133 We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland and forested land. '22
2134

2135 We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and
2136 conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax.'22

2137 In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use
2138 value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real
2139 estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate.
2140 '22

2141 We support the position that all property used for agricultural purposes, whether it is
2142 rented to non-family members or not, shall be treated as qualified agricultural property under
2143 the provisions of Maryland estate tax law. '22

Fuel Tax

2144 We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to
2145 allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level. '22
2146

2147 We oppose increasing the state fuel tax even if it is based on inflation. '22

Income Tax

2148 Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal
2149 tax code. '22
2150

Inheritance Tax

2151 We strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '22
2152

2153 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-
2154 owned agribusinesses. '22
2155

Health Taxes

2156 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '22
2157

Property Tax

2158 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm
2159 or agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '22
2160

We urge amending the Agriculture Use Assessment Law to prescribe a standardized
2161 formula to ensure the full value of this special assessment is not offset by other adjustments in
2162 the total property value of the assessment for farm properties with a homesite. '22
2163

We urge amending the basis for a property tax assessment appeal to include evaluating
2164 the proper application of the agriculture use assessment to the total property value. '22
2165

The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly
2166 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '22
2167

We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings including tenant houses. '22
2168

We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings. '22
2169

Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
2170 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '22
2171

Farms and businesses such as operating equine farms, farmers markets and on-farm
2172 markets, operating on-farm food processing, alcohol production, agritourism, and value-added

2173 production businesses along with the buildings associated with these activities should be
2174 assessed at a unified agricultural use tax rate. '24

2175 We oppose a tiered agricultural tax assessment policy. '24

2176 MDFB urges SDAT hiring of an ombudsman to assist with determining the assessment of
2177 agricultural properties. '24

2178 **Sales and Use Taxes**

2179 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
2180 related services from the state sales tax. '22

2181 To clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases, we
2182 recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt
2183 card. '22

2184 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '22

2185 We support exempting electric use on farms from the sales and use tax. '22

2186 We oppose the sales tax on Maryland-produced alcoholic beverages being higher than
2187 other food items. '24

2188 We oppose the creation of a services tax that would apply to agricultural services. '24

2189 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

2190 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
2191 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
2192 operation or structure. '22

2193 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

2194 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as
2195 general fund enhancements. '22

2196 **TRESPASSING**

2197 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.
2198 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
2199 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
2200 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
2201 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
2202 injury sustained by trespassers. '13

2203 The maximum fine should be raised to \$5,000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
2204 destruction of property. '18

2205 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
2206 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs
2207 or paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission
2208 and to know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private
2209 land. '06

2210 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a
2211 jail term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine if a minor is convicted. The
2212 offender should be required to pay the property owner three times the amount of destruction
2213 including time loss and all court cost. '14

2214 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
2215 by others without written permission of up to \$5,000.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up
2216 to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore,
2217 violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '18

2219 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
2220 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
2221 existing laws and regulations.'07

2222 We oppose surveyors access private properties without prior notification and approval
2223 by the landowners. '25

2224 **Unmanned Aerial Systems**

2225 We request legislation be enacted so that no person, entity, or state agency shall use a
2226 manned aircraft, drone, or unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance or observation under the
2227 doctrine of open fields of any individual, property owned by an individual, farm, or agricultural
2228 industry without the consent of that individual, property owner, farm, or agricultural industry.
2229 '13

2230 We support the use of unmanned aerial systems in agricultural businesses. '24

2231 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing the use of
2232 Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) beyond the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards.
2233 '24

2234

2235 **TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES**

2236 To achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

2237 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion
2238 of this program; '24

2239 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient
2240 runoff into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban
2241 areas, as well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E., deicing
2242 aircraft and parking lots); '24

2243 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific
2244 research, as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately
2245 result in the Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '24

2246 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with
2247 maximum cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the
2248 purchase of equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '24

2249 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay to increase
2250 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '24

2251 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
2252 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '24

2253 We expect all states in the watershed to accept equitable and proportionate
2254 responsibility for cleaning up the tributaries leading to the Chesapeake Bay.'24

2255

2256 **TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY**

2257 **Bicycle Safety**

2258 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
2259 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '20

2260 We recommend that scheduled bicycle, running or similar recreational events be
2261 conducted in a manner that does not inhibit agricultural activities. '20

2262 All bicycles should be required to have front and rear flashing lights and the rider wear
2263 bright and reflective clothing while riding. '20

2264 **Driver Safety Rules**

2265 We oppose any legislation to increase the age to obtain a driver's license.'20

2266 **Infrastructure Needs**

2267 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
2268 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '20

2269 We support the improvements to all Maryland Interstates.'20

2270 **Inspections**

2271 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
2272 motor vehicles.'20

2273 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.'20

2274 **Safe Movement of Farm Equipment**

2275 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of farmers. '20

2276 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the
2277 proper use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend
2278 that a mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to
2279 aid in recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and
2280 roads to improve safety conditions. '20

2281 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow-moving vehicle signs for any
2282 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced. '20

2283 We recommend Maryland State Highway Administration use the digital messaging signs
2284 to warn motorists of agricultural equipment use on highways during spring planting season,
2285 summer small grain harvest and fall grain harvest. '20

2286 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
2287 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
2288 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are
2289 (1) properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped
2290 approached another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the
2291 "other driver" being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her
2292 vehicle. '20

2293 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
2294 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
2295 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '20

2296 **Truck Regulations**

2297 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent
2298 with those of neighboring states. '20

2299 We support the K Tag radius being 25 miles or more. '20

2300 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal, but an axle weight is off, enforcement
2301 personnel should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '20

2302 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products
2303 up to 25 miles. '20

2304 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws.'20

2305 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
2306 agricultural or commercial traffic on state highways. '20

2307 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
2308 '20

2309 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '20

2310 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
2311 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive
2312 Maintenance Program. '20

2313 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
2314 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should
2315 be established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time
2316 periods to get them repaired. '20

2317 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. '20

2318 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within
2319 each class. '20

2320 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
2321 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
2322 transportation of farm commodities. '20

2323 We support the right of farmers to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers in any
2324 state where it is legal to do so. We further support the right of farmers to employ a title service
2325 agency or agent operating outside of Maryland to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers
2326 in any state where it is legal to do so. '20

2327

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND

2328 We oppose the University of Maryland (UMD) removing "agriculture" from the name of
2329 the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR), and majors, and programs. '24

Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority

2330 We recommend the University System of Maryland establish an Ag Producers Board of
2331 Advisors. '21

2332 We recommend to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
2333 University of Maryland College Park that they establish an Ag Producers Board of Advisors that
2334 includes a MDFB representative. '21

2335 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
2336 but not at the expense of "traditional agriculture" courses and research. '21

2337 We urge the University System of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional
2338 research as is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support
2339 University of Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education
2340 programs. '21

2341 We support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and
2342 its tripartite mission of research, teaching, and extension. Because of the many challenges for
2343 Agriculture in the future, which cannot be met without qualified graduates, we urge curricula
2344 for students who aspire to be the future farmers, agriculture leaders, ag teachers, extension
2345 agents, scientists, and more. '21

2346 We urge the University System of Maryland to fill and support faculty positions relevant
2347 to the Maryland agriculture industry needs. '21

Funding

2348 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
2349 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
2350 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
2351 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
2352 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
2353 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '13

2354 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
2355 for funding the University of Maryland Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We
2356 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable

2360 funding support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the
2361 University. '21

2362 Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center

2363 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which aids farmers for
2364 business plan development. We request staffing to continue this valuable program. '21

2365 Law School/Litigation

2366 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
2367 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
2368 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state
2369 clients. Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm
2370 business should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being
2371 accepted by the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should
2372 provide equal representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '13

2373 Research and Data

2374 We urge the University of Maryland and the MDA to conduct further research on small
2375 grain crops that will maximize yields while utilizing fertilizers in the best ways for both plant
2376 uptake and environmental benefits. '12

2377 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
2378 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system so that
2379 research is more readily available to the producers. '21

2380 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
2381 varieties of vegetables, fruits, and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase
2382 competition with other areas of the country. '08

2383 We urge the University to continue the "Field Days" at the research farms. '21

2384 Teacher Preparation

2385 We recommend the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural
2386 Resources to continue to develop and expand the current program that provides an Agricultural
2387 Education major, giving students a specialization in Ag Education leading to a career path as an
2388 agricultural educator and/or extension educator. We support allocating new resources to the
2389 program. '21

2390 Tuition

2391 We urge tuition increases at the schools within the University System of Maryland be
2392 limited to the cost-of-living index. '21

2393 University of Maryland Extension

2394 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
2395 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
2396 compete in a competitive marketplace. The strength of Extension has always been at the local
2397 level. We strongly urge that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
2398 Agent/Educator. '21

2399 We strongly urge Area Extension director positions be eliminated and replaced by
2400 previous system of County Extension Directors, and that these positions be filled by individuals
2401 that have an extension background and leadership experience. '21

2402 Due to agriculture's ever-increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
2403 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment
2404 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
2405 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
2406 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11

2407 We support the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to advise and assist the UMD
2408 Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future structure of UMD Extension.
2409 This committee should consist of commodity groups and stakeholders to represent the
2410 different geographic regions of the state. '23

2411 We recommend the re-establishment of county Extension Advisory Committees /
2412 Councils including re-establishment of mechanisms for flexible and timely access by County
2413 Extension personnel to their county finances so as to assure continuity of business. '24

2414
2415

URBAN FARMING/AGRICULTURE

2416 We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture. '17

2417 We support modifying zoning laws to promote urban farming/agriculture and the right
2418 to farm within urban areas and city limits. '21

2419 We support ongoing skills development training in urban farming/agriculture for all
2420 ages. '21

2421 We support the expansion of urban farming/agriculture and the creation of a clear
2422 pathway to land ownership for urban farmers. '21

2423 We support grant programs to provide infrastructure for urban farming/agriculture. '21
2424 We support the use of Program Open Space funds to purchase easements on vacant lots
2425 and greenspaces within planned urban developments and city limits to be used for urban
2426 farming/agriculture. '21

2427 We support the creation of Agricultural Zones in urban areas throughout the State of
2428 Maryland. '24

2429 We support increased tax incentives for landowners and businesses that rent or lease
2430 property for Urban Agriculture Projects. '24

2431 We urge the designation of land from non-agricultural use to agricultural use in urban
2432 areas last for perpetuity or until the property is sold. '24

2433 We encourage the Maryland Department of Agriculture to seek additional federal grants
2434 for Maryland Farmers, especially those farming in urban areas. '24

2435 We urge that additional funding is allocated to the Urban Agriculture Grant Program. '24

2436
2437

VETERINARY MEDICINE

2438 We support the continued sale of veterinary prescribed and over-the-counter animal
2439 health products and oppose further restrictions on their use, including any required on-farm
2440 reporting of drugs administered to livestock. Equine and agricultural animal vets should have an
2441 extended reporting time between 48-72 hours post administration due to the environment the
2442 vets are working in on most calls. '24

2443 We oppose any initiatives, referendums, or legislation, that creates standards above
2444 scientifically validated veterinary science and best management practices. '24

2445 We recognize agricultural animal veterinarians as essential farm worker personnel and
2446 support their inclusion in agriculture incentives. We support agricultural animal veterinary
2447 education in schools and recognize the curriculum as agriculture education. '24

2448 We support additional seats for Maryland residents at the Virginia-Maryland College of
2449 Veterinary Medicine (VMCVM) school. '24

2450 We support increasing the number of available educational opportunities for individuals
2451 interested in pursuing veterinary medicine. '24

2452 We oppose the collection of antibiotic sales data from veterinarians. '24

2454

WILDLANDS

2456 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
2457 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas
2458 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
2459 management plans. '25

2460

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

2462 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to
2463 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to
2464 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident
2465 Canada geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative
2466 impacts on agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the
2467 Chesapeake Bay.'09

2468 We support the creation of a landowner ombudsman within DNR to focus on wildlife
2469 management on private lands. '17

2470 We urge county and state parkland to have a valid wildlife management plan to control
2471 and properly maintain the wildlife population on this land. '17

2472 We support the use of Wildlife Management Permits on both Public and Private owned
2473 lands. '21

2474 We support permitting individuals traveling to and from wildlife management activities,
2475 that are authorized by the Department of Natural Resources, to transport a handgun for the
2476 performance of those activities. '21

2477 **Bird Control**

2478 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any
2479 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and
2480 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

Because they pose a threat to livestock, especially newborn calves, lambs, etc., we urge removing black headed vultures from the Migratory Birds Treaty Act. '18

2483 We oppose any law, regulation, or ordinance that would prohibit the use of certain
2484 devices for the purpose of repelling birds or other wildlife from agricultural crops. '22

2485 We encourage a simplified and less restrictive process for controlling black headed
2486 vultures, and an increase in the number of birds to be eradicated. '23

2487 Black Bear

2488 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western
2489 Maryland to other counties.'07

2490 We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to
2491 control the black bear population in our state. '15

2492 We support the creation of a Bear Management Permit system for the management of
2493 troublesome bear.'15

2494 We urge DNR to create a bear depredation permit which would allow troublesome
2495 bears to be removed at the time they are causing damage. '21

2496 We urge that the bear season damage permit apply to the farm where the damage
2497 occurs and contiguous properties, with the landowner's permission. '17

2498 We support changes to the bear hunt which will grant landowners more equitable
2499 access to the hunt. '15

2500 We support the hunting of bear by all agricultural producers and their immediate family
2501 on property they own during the regular bear season without going through the lottery. '17

Coyote

2503 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

Feral Hogs

2505 Feral hogs should be regulated as a "varmint" species. '15

Deer

2507 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of
2508 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '17

2509 We urge DNR to lower the ratio of deer per square mile. '18

2510 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
2511 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
2512 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '17

(1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '17

(2) List Sika deer as nuisance species due to extreme crop damage. '17

(3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
2516 seasons. '17

(4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd
2518 population count. '17

(5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
2520 areas. '17

(6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
2522 herd. '17

(7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '17

(8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent
2525 to agricultural lands. '17

(9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and
2527 processing harvested deer. '17

(10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
2529 management. '17

(11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
2531 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of
2532 deer population. '17

2533 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land,
2534 with hunting times from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. '25

2535 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
2536 tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17

2537 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a
2538 plan to manage and control wildlife populations. '17

2539 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an
2540 increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17

Deer Crop Damage

2542 Any refusal or increase in RMA (Risk Management Agency) premiums, specifically due to
2543 deer crop damage should enable farmers to use increased methods of deer harvesting,
2544 including the night use of DMP's (Deer Management Permits). '22

2545 We support the allowance of off duty DNR officers to be able to hunt on DMP's. '25

2546 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate
2547 enactment:

2548 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17
2549 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17
2550 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop
2551 within the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17
2552 (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17
2553 (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17
2554 (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
2555 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
2556 (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
2557 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
2558 disposing properly should be eliminated. '17
2559 (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to always use the weapon of
2560 choice for filling Deer Management permits. '17
2561 (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
2562 (10) Implementation of a program to allow certified processors to be able to sell
2563 venison that is harvested on a Deer Management Permit. '24
2564 (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
2565 (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the
2566 authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated
2567 as such. '17
2568 (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be
2569 deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17
2570 (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation
2571 non-profit under a crop damage permit. '17
2572 (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to help deter crop
2573 damage. '21

2574

Fox Chasing

2575 We support requiring fox hunting clubs to obtain written permission from landowners
2576 to conduct the hunt. '25

2577

Furbearers

2578 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

2579 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase
2580 a stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any
2581 fee. '08

2582 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

2583 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
2584 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture
2585 of fur-bearing wildlife. '10

2586 We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

2587 We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species like groundhogs if they
2588 are causing property damage. '17

2589

Hunting Ethics and Liability

2590 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
2591 taking place. '07

2593 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
2594 manner like motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record after
2595 an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

2596 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
2597 the maximum extent possible. '06

2598 Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by
2599 hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting
2600 activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in
2601 safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established
2602 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

2603 Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses

2604 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
2605 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
2606 regulations. '17

2607 We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the
2608 purpose of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18

2609 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
2610 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
2611 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
2612 during that season. '17

2613 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17

2614 We support extending the deer firearms hunting season through February. '21

2615 We support a longer firearm season on privately owned lands that overlaps the
2616 primitive weapon seasons that will maximize existing bag limits. '21

2617 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17

2618 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17

2619 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17

2620 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
2621 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren, and employees when hunting only on that
2622 property. We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and
2623 his/her spouse, children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural
2624 purposes (or a sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this
2625 farmland. We are opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license
2626 exemption to persons (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under
2627 the age of 16. '17

2628 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
2629 hunting or trapping privileges. '17

2630 We support funding for deer processing and donations programs from state General
2631 Funds or additional hunting license fees '23

2632 We oppose any restriction on the use of lead ammunition for all non-waterfowl hunting.
2633 '25

2634 Waterfowl

2635 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2636 Service to take all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow goose
2637 population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

2638 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
2639 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

2640 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
2641 throughout, starting about November 5th.'09

2642 We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on
2643 or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level
2644 consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14

2645 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
2646 increase in bag limits. '08

2647 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

2648 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:

2649 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08

2650 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09

2651 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of
2652 property lines. '08

2653 We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows
2654 or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area to be charged with baiting. '14

2655 We oppose the authorization of Sunday ~~waterfowl~~ hunting for migratory waterfowl. '25

Waterfowl Crop Damage

2657 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

2658 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e., recorders or baiters) to
2659 reduce the snow goose population. '08

YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS

2662 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland
2663 through:

2664 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '20

2665 (2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '20

2666 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation
2667 easements; '20

2668 (4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

2669 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them; '20

2670 (6) Support and greater promotion of programs. '20

2671 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture
2672 to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '20