



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

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

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

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

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

Colleges & Universities

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

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

Curriculum

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Environmental & Agricultural Literacy Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

Funding for MAEF & Ag Education

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

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

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

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

Teacher Training

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

State FFA

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

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

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

Legislature Education

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

AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

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

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

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

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ag Preservation Funding

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

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

We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '21

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

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

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

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

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

Appraisals

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

Mapping

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

Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

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

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

Other Methods to Preserve Agriculture Land

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

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

Transfer Development Rights

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

Zoning

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

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

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

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

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We support incidental outdoor stays as an accessory use on a working farm. Regulations and approvals should be addressed on a county-by-county basis. '21

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

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

AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION

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

AIR QUALITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

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

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

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

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

ALCOHOL PRODUCTION – ON FARM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS

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

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

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

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

ANIMAL CARE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Antibiotic Feed Additives

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

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

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

Livestock and Poultry

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

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

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

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

Vaccines

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

ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES

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

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

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

AQUACULTURE

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

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

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

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

AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD

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

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

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

Liability and Insurance

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

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

BEEKEEPING

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

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

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

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

BROWNFIELDS

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

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

CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS

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

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

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

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

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

CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up

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

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

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

Storm water Management Regulations and Fees

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

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

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

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

TMDL & Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)

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

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

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

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

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

COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING

We oppose bans on common agricultural production practices. '23

Farmers' Markets

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

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

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

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

Labeling Requirements

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

MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts

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

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

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

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

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

Deep Water Terminal

We support a viable grain export terminal. '21

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

Roadside Markets

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

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

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

Roadside Signs

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

Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products

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

Value Added

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

We support the removal of the revenue cap for the on-farm-home processing license. '24

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

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

Best Management Practices

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

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

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

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

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

Conservation Practices

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

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

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

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

Our proposed changes include the following:

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

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

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

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

COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

Cover Crop Program

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

- (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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

CROP PROTECTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Disease Prevention & Pest Control

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

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

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

Environmental Surcharge

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

Pesticide Stewardship

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

CYBER SECURITY FOR THE FOOD CHAIN

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

DAIRY INDUSTRY

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

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

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

Milk Marketing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dairy Inspection & Regulation

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

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

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

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

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

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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

We support:

(1) The use of recycled water for cooling for any new proposed digital infrastructure, including data centers. '25

(2) Transparency by local authorities in the siting of digital infrastructure. '25

(3) Requiring data centers to supply their own power before tapping into the grid. '25

(4) Study of how data center development will impact agricultural land, noise pollution, and the demand on existing power grid infrastructure. '25

(5) Infrastructure must be in place before a data center is considered for development. '25

We oppose:

(1) Digital infrastructure being built on Class 1 and Class 2 agricultural soils. '25

(2) Any new utility-scale solar development being publicly or privately required for any new proposed digital infrastructure. '2

(3) Localities using eminent domain to provide land, water or electricity to digital infrastructure facilities or sites. '25

924 **DREDGE SPOIL**

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

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

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

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

932
933 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

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

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

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

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

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

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

947
948 **ENERGY POLICY**

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

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

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

955 We urge that farm rates and demand charges be comparable across electric providers.
956 '19

957 We oppose the banning of small gas engines. '21

958 We oppose the decommissioning of existing commercial power generating facilities until
959 an equally or more powerful, viable energy generating source is ready to operate in Maryland.
960 '24

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

963 We support that new transmission lines should not cross over Agri-tourism operations.
964 '25

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

967 **Ethanol & Biodiesel Fuel**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other Alternative Energy Sources

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces

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

Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS)

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING

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

EQUINE INDUSTRY

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

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

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

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

FAMILY VALUES

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

FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES

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

We recommend more farmer input on FSA office closures before any implementation occurs. '25

We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and consolidation of offices and services. '25

FOOD SYSTEMS

We support:

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

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

We support:

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

We oppose:

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

Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

We support:

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

Maryland Market Money (MMM)

We support:

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

FORESTRY

Forest Conservation

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

We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with 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

Government Spending

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maryland Department of Agriculture

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

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

Regulatory Reform

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

State and Local Agencies

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

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

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

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

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

State-Owned Farmland

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

Teachers' Retirement Pension Program

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

GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT

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

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

A comprehensive title examination of the underlying railway shall be required to confirm that the public entity possesses clear, conclusive, and indisputable title to the property 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. '24

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We oppose mandatory farm worker contracts. '24

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

Heat Standards

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

Seasonal Workforce

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Workers' Compensation

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

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

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

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

We support strong penalties for abuses of workers' compensation benefits. '24
We oppose requiring employers to participate in a state-operated workers' compensation plan. '24

We oppose changes in workers' compensation policies or laws that increase costs to agricultural employers and have a negative impact on existing jobs and job creation.'24

Youth Employment

We support maximum opportunities for youth to work on farms. We believe youth gain important life skills, learn safety around animals and equipment, benefit from involvement in programs like 4-H and FFA, become interested in careers in agriculture, better understand that farmers are professionals and use best management practices, and establish a strong work ethic. Therefore, we urge government not to limit these opportunities. '24

LAND STEWARDSHIP

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

LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING

Annexation

Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations within the county. '22

Growth Management

We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations within our state. '22

We oppose any state policy that overrides county planning and zoning authority. '22

Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties. Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural counties. '22

Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '22

We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). '22

Foreign Investment

Foreign investment in Maryland assets is a concern. The impact of foreign investment in agriculture, banking, insurance, and other business institutions in the United States should be monitored. '23

Foreign government ownership of utility companies and natural resource businesses, including agricultural land, should be limited to less than a controlling interest. We oppose preferential treatment of foreign investments in agriculture and insist that foreign investors be required to conform to the same tax laws, import and export regulations as American producers. '23

Permitting

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

Zoning

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

We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '22

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

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Penalties & Confinement

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

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

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

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

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

Judicial Process

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

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

Investigation of Crimes

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

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

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

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

We support maintaining adequate police force funding to fully meet the

needs of rural communities and agricultural producers. '20

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM

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

LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS

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

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

Contributory Negligence

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

Agricultural Immunity

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

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

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

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

LOCAL/TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING

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

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

MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP

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

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

MOSQUITO CONTROL

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

NONTIDAL WETLANDS

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

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

NOXIOUS WEEDS

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

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

Noxious Weed List

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

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

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

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

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

Enforcement

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

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

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

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

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

Public Education

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

Weed Control Methods

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

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

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

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

Weeds of Concern

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

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Nutrient Management for Farms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations. '05

c. Prevent yield capping. '05

d. We encourage the leveraging use of production methods and scientific nutrient recommendations from all US land-grant universities to make Maryland's Nutrient Management Planning more efficient '23

e. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12

f. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14

g. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and technologies. '18

MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a farm based on a complaint. '09

We support the optional on-line reporting system for Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) but oppose that being the only option. '21

We oppose increasing the nutrient application setback from tidal waters beyond 25 feet. '25

Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality

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

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

Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education

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

Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery

We support permanent funding for the University of Maryland Extension Nutrient Management Program in order to hire and maintain adequate, permanent nutrient management advisors to provide nutrient management education and plan development. '23

(Kent, As Amended)

All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '23

MAFO/CAFO Permits

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Manure and Litter Management

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

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

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

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

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

We encourage government funding of composting facilities. '18

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

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

Soil Testing

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

NUTRIENT/CARBON TRADING

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

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

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

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

POULTRY INDUSTRY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We oppose the Open Fields Doctrine. '24

Eminent Domain

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS

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

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

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

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

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

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

The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural 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

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

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

RECYCLING

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

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

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

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

Tire Fund & Tire Recycling

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

RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

We oppose the taking of additional "Right of Way" to add "Bicycle" lanes to county or 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

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

Funding to Protect Farms

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

Lemon Law

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

RIPARIAN BUFFERS

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

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

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

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

Road Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Road Construction

An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We 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
 1972 **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

2002 **RURAL COMMUNITIES**

2003 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was created
 2004 to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13

2005 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
 2006 county governments during the legislative session. '13

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

2009

2010 **RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM**

2011 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
 2012 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
 2013 Preservation Program.'06

2014 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
 2015 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
 2016 '07

2017

2018 **SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

2019 **School Standards**

2020 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
 2021 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
 2022 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all
 2023 and should be enforced by the school system. '07

2024 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

2025 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging
 2026 in illegal drug activity. '07

2027 **School Meals & Farm to School Initiatives**

2028 We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote Farm to School
 2029 programs and the purchase of Maryland grown products.

2030 We support:

2031 (1) The funding of the Maryland Farm to School Meal program. '25

2032 (2) Farm to School initiatives which encourage the procurement of Maryland grown
 2033 foods. '25

2034 (3) Educating students about healthy foods and nutrition, promoting school gardens,
 2035 and encouraging farm/farmer visits. '25

2036 (4) Schools having the ability to prepare and serve these foods in the cafeteria. '25

School Year

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

School Attendance Policy

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

SEAT BELTS

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

SEED TESTING

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

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

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

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

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

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

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

SEWAGE SLUDGE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STATE DESIGNATIONS

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

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

STRAY VOLTAGE

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

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

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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

1. It must be profitable for farmers. '08

2. It must work to conserve soil, water, and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08

3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08

4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08

5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture. '08

6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency. '10

7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic or regenerative farming practices. '19

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

TAXES

Admission and Amusement Tax

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

Capital Gains Tax

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

Estate Tax

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

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

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

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

Fuel Tax

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

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

Income Tax

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

Inheritance Tax

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

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

Health Taxes

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

Property Tax

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

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

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

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

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

We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings. '22

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

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

production businesses along with the buildings associated with these activities should be assessed at a unified agricultural use tax rate. '24
We oppose a tiered agricultural tax assessment policy. '24
MDFB urges SDAT hiring of an ombudsman to assist with determining the assessment of agricultural properties. '24

Sales and Use Taxes

Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and related services from the state sales tax. '22
To clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases, we recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt card. '22
We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '22
We support exempting electric use on farms from the sales and use tax. '22
We oppose the sales tax on Maryland-produced alcoholic beverages being higher than other food items. '24
We oppose the creation of a services tax that would apply to agricultural services. '24

Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees

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

User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes

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

TRESPASSING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unmanned Aerial Systems

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

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

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

TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY

Bicycle Safety

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

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

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

Driver Safety Rules

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

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

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

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

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

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

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND

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

Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority

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

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

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

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

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

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

Funding

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

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

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

Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center

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

Law School/Litigation

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

Research and Data

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

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

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

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

Teacher Preparation

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

Tuition

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

University of Maryland Extension

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

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

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

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

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

URBAN FARMING/AGRICULTURE

We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture. '17

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

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

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

We support grant programs to provide infrastructure for urban farming/agriculture. '21

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

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

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

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

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

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

VETERINARY MEDICINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

2454
2455 **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
2461 **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

2481 Because they pose a threat to livestock, especially newborn calves, lambs, etc., we urge
2482 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

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

Coyote

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

Feral Hogs

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

Deer

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

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

We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These 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 seasons. '17
- (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd population count. '17
- (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management areas. '17
- (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer 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 to agricultural lands. '17
- (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and processing harvested deer. '17
- (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer management. '17
- (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of deer population. '17

We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land, with hunting times from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. '25

Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17

We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a plan to manage and control wildlife populations. '17

We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17

Deer Crop Damage

Any refusal or increase in RMA (Risk Management Agency) premiums, specifically due to deer crop damage should enable farmers to use increased methods of deer harvesting, including the night use of DMP's (Deer Management Permits). '22

We support the allowance of off duty DNR officers to be able to hunt on DMP's. '25

The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate enactment:

- (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17
- (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17
- (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop within the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17
- (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17
- (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17
- (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
- (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not disposing properly should be eliminated. '17
- (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to always use the weapon of choice for filling Deer Management permits. '17
- (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
- (10) Implementation of a program to allow certified processors to be able to sell venison that is harvested on a Deer Management Permit. '24
- (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
- (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated as such. '17
- (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17
- (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation non-profit under a crop damage permit. '17
- (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to help deter crop damage. '21

Fox Chasing

We support requiring fox hunting clubs to obtain written permission from landowners to conduct the hunt. '25

Furbearers

We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase a stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any fee. '08

We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture of fur-bearing wildlife. '10

We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species like groundhogs if they are causing property damage. '17

Hunting Ethics and Liability

The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is taking place. '07

We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a manner like motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record after an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to the maximum extent possible. '06

Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses

In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management regulations. '17

We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the purpose of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18

The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed during that season. '17

We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17

We support extending the deer firearms hunting season through February. '21

We support a longer firearm season on privately owned lands that overlaps the primitive weapon seasons that will maximize existing bag limits. '21

We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17

We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17

We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17

We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren, and employees when hunting only on that property. We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and his/her spouse, children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural purposes (or a sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this farmland. We are opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license exemption to persons (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under the age of 16. '17

We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's hunting or trapping privileges. '17

We support funding for deer processing and donations programs from state General Funds or additional hunting license fees '23

We oppose any restriction on the use of lead ammunition for all non-waterfowl hunting. '25

Waterfowl

We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to take all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow goose population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform throughout, starting about November 5th.'09

We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14

We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an increase in bag limits. '08

We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:

a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08

b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09

c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of property lines. '08

We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area to be charged with baiting. '14

We oppose the authorization of Sunday ~~waterfowl~~ hunting for migratory waterfowl. '25

Waterfowl Crop Damage

We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e., recorders or baiters) to reduce the snow goose population. '08

YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS

We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland through:

(1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '20

(2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '20

(3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation easements; '20

(4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

(5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them; '20

(6) Support and greater promotion of programs. '20

We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '20