



Maryland Farm Bureau

2023 Policy Book

***As Adopted by the Delegates at the 2022 Annual Meeting
December 6, 2022***

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1 **FOREWORD**

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

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

9 Farm Bureau policies stem from our belief that agriculture in Maryland is an essential
10 industry necessary to maintain the viability of our state. Farm families discuss issues, talk them
11 over in the community and make recommendations. County resolutions derived from these
12 community recommendations were adopted as policies on county issues and as
13 recommendations on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies
14 herein were derived from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm
15 Bureau policy for 2023 as set by voting delegates during the 107th annual convention of the
16 Maryland Farm Bureau on December 6, 2022.

17
18 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

19 **Career Technology Education**

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

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

28 We support the Environmental, Agriculture & Natural Resources Pathway (Certified
29 Agriculture Education Program). The program should include all three rings of the Agriculture
30 Education model (classroom/laboratory instruction, FFA, and Supervised Agricultural
31 Experiences) and be fully funded and staffed to ensure all local and state programs are viable.
32 '22

33 We support ag teachers receiving extra duty contracts to cover extracurricular duties.
34 '22

35 **Colleges & Universities**

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

38 Maryland should fund the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for farmers.
39 '19

40 **Curriculum**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

67 **Environmental & Agricultural Literacy Requirements**

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

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

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

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

79 **Funding for MAEF & Ag Education**

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

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

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

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

88 **Teacher Training**

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

93 **State FFA**

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

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

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

99 **Legislature Education**

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

103

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AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

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

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

110

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AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

137 **Ag Preservation Funding**

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

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

143 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '21

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

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

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

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

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

157 **Appraisals**

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

165 **Mapping**

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

169 **Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation**

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

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

184 **Other Methods to Preserve Agriculture Land**

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

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

193 **Transfer Development Rights**

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

195 **Zoning**

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

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

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

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

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206

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

231 We support legislation and improvements in regulations that allow farm breweries more
232 opportunities for direct consumer sales. '11
233 We support agritainment as an acceptable use of agricultural land. '13
234 Agritourism should be defined as activities conducted on a farm and offered to the
235 public or to invited groups for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in
236 the farm operation.'14
237 We support wedding and event venues as an accessory use on a working farm '16
238 We support incidental outdoor stays as an accessory use on a working farm.
239 Regulations and approvals should be addressed on a county-by-county basis. '21
240 We encourage landowners to clearly define property boundaries for Agritourism
241 activities. '21
242 We oppose production of synthetically produced 'meats' being labeled as meat. '19
243 We support legislation to allow utility cooperatives to apply for grants to extend
244 broadband service to underserved rural areas. '19
245 We encourage the State of Maryland to review the regulation of Cottage Kitchens and
246 expand their capabilities as appropriate. '20
247

AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION

249 We urge MDE to consider all agricultural water withdrawal permits in use before
250 increasing water withdrawal permits or approving new water withdrawal permits for
251 municipalities or subdivisions when these lands coincide. '07
252 We urge MDA, MDE and DNR to work with the U.S. Geological Survey in updating
253 computer models for Maryland's underground aquifers. '07
254 We oppose any fees for permits or any fees for agriculture water use in the state.'12
255 We oppose the mandatory use of flow meters on Ag Water appropriation usage
256 permits. '12
257 Under the State Water Application Law, MDE is the only agency that may restrict water
258 usage in Maryland. We believe MDE should continue to be the only authority in this area.
259 Local governments should not be allowed to regulate water usage. Agricultural water use
260 should continue to be exempt from usage control. '04
261 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture's right to use water for irrigation.
262 '04
263 We encourage MDE to streamline the agricultural water withdrawal permit process to
264 provide more timely approval. '08
265 Under MDE's water withdrawal permit, a farmer who uses less water than allocated for
266 a given month/year should not be penalized and should not receive a lower water allocation.
267 '15
268 When a water appropriation permit hearing is requested by an interested party, MDE
269 should require the interested party to be in attendance during the hearing. If the requesting
270 party fails to appear, the hearing should be dismissed. '15
271 We request MDE use "irrigated inches per acre" rather than "gallons per day" when
272 formulating water appropriation permits. '15
273 Surface water screening devices should not be required on man-made irrigation ponds.
274 '14
275 We urge the state government to designate pond/river screening devices be eligible for
276 cost share. '18
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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

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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. '15

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

370 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in
371 educating the food industry, school children, the public and those elected to represent us in
372 government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,
373 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated
374 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.
375 '18

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

378 We support the establishment of a Livestock Care Standards Board at MDA to review
379 and publish existing industry standards for livestock care and make recommendations to the
380 Secretary of Agriculture as needed. '18

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

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

386 **Antibiotic Feed Additives**

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

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

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

392

393 **ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES**

394 We recommend the Maryland Department of Agriculture update, remodel and maintain
395 regional animal health laboratories. '08

396 We urge Maryland Department of Agriculture to fund and fill the un-staffed positions
397 without delay. '10

398 A strong animal health program needs to be supported by the state. We support full
399 accreditation of Maryland's Animal Health Labs at Salisbury and Frederick. With biosecurity
400 and agri-terrorism concerns and to support the well-being of Maryland's livestock industries, it
401 is crucial that the laboratory services are upgraded for rapid and accurate disease diagnosis. '09

402

403 **AQUACULTURE**

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

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

412 We support legislation that will strengthen laws related to theft of oysters from
413 aquaculture operations, including enforcement of oyster theft under criminal property larceny
414 charges. We also support amending the elements of the current criminal charge law to allow
415 proof of cut buoys versus those frayed by natural causes. We recommend changes to the
416 Natural Resources Article to include language to enforce Maryland's criminal property larceny

417 law against not only oyster aquaculture thieves who knowingly steal from aquaculture leases,
418 but also those who knowingly possess illegally harvested oysters. '22

419

420

AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD

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422

423

424

425

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

426

BEEKEEPING

427

428

429

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

430

431

432

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

433

434

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

435

436

437

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

438

439

BROWNFIELDS

440

441

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

442

443

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

444

445

CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

446

447

448

449

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

450

451

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

452

453

454

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

456

457

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

458

459

460

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

461

462

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

480 We support the allowance of tax credits to be sold through a broker system based on
481 the current income tax subtraction modification for the purchasing of conservation equipment
482 '15

483 **Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up**

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

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

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

491 **Storm water Management Regulations and Fees**

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

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

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

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

503 **TMDL & Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)**

504 Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and the Total Maximum Daily Load
505 (TMDL) for the Bay and its tributaries will place an unfair economic disadvantage on farms in
506 the Bay watershed as compared to farms elsewhere. As the percentage of nutrient load from
507 urban areas continues to increase, it would be inequitable for agriculture to be burdened with
508 excessive offsets and trading. We ask that cost vs. benefit be carefully considered in all debate
509 on environmental policies. No programs should be implemented without a financial impact

510 study being done. Government should direct actions that are the best that can be achieved
511 within reasonable limits to reduce impacts to the Bay. '19
512 We urge funding for all cost-share programs for farmers to implement the TMDL and
513 funding for staff and technical support for the UMD Extension and the Soil Conservation
514 Districts. '10
515 As the TMDL WIP is implemented, private property rights should be protected. State
516 and local governments should be precluded from attaining goals by mandating agricultural land
517 retirement using eminent domain or regulation. '13
518 If the implementation of environmental regulations results in the removal of
519 agricultural land from production or the installation of conservation practices, then the farmer
520 should be compensated for the land and maintenance of the practices. '18
521 We support new dedicated federal funding for the Conowingo Watershed
522 Implementation Plan (WIP). '21
523

524 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

525 **Farmers' Markets**

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

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

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

532 We oppose the use of title "Farmers' Market" for a store that is not truly a Farmers'
533 Market. We urge Maryland to adopt a law like the one invoked in Maine to define how and
534 when the term Farmers' Market may be used. '21

535 **Labeling Requirements**

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

537 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

538 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise.
539 We urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's
540 efforts to improve marketing services. We support the "Maryland's Best" marketing program.
541 '21

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

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

546 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of
547 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities. '21

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

550 **Deep Water Terminal**

551 We support a viable grain export terminal. '21

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

554 **Roadside Markets**

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

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

560 **Roadside Signs**

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

564 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

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

567 **Value Added**

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

569

570

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

571 **Best Management Practices**

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

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

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

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

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

586 **Conservation Practices**

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

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

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

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

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

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

605 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

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

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

611 We propose changes to the CREP that are intended to keep prime land available for
612 production, reduce the economic incentive to take whole farms or major portions thereof out
613 of production, to remove the government as a primary cash rent competitor for valuable
614 agricultural land and to provide for more effective maintenance of land under CREP contract.
615 '17

616 Our proposed changes include the following:

- 617 (1) CREP contracts should be issued only on land that has a scientifically supported impact
618 on water quality. CREP should not be used to create wildlife habitat where water quality
619 benefit is negligible. '17
- 620 (2) Buffers should be variable, with a maximum width of 100 feet, based on topographical
621 and soil conditions to ensure water quality benefits and minimize loss of productive
622 cropland. '17
- 623 (3) Buffers established adjacent to ditches should have a maximum width of 50 feet and
624 should be smaller if prime and productive soils are impacted. Buffers should not include
625 trees within 35 feet of a ditch to facilitate maintenance of the ditch. The practice of
626 digging ditches just to enroll the entire acreage on farms should be prohibited. '17
- 627 (4) Regulations should be developed to require weed control on all land subject to a CREP
628 contract. The maintenance and control rules should be enforced. '17
- 629 (5) Mowing of CREP lands should be required annually if weeds cannot be controlled by
630 other means. Weeds of primary concern to adjacent farmers include, but are not limited
631 to giant ragweed, multiflora rose, burr cucumber, phragmites, autumn olive, mile-a-
632 minute, and kudzu, scrub trees and noxious grasses. '17
- 633 (6) Rental rates for future CREP contracts should be adjusted to provide for a sliding-scale
634 that pays more for land immediately adjacent to water and less for land closer to prime
635 and productive soils. Rates should be in line with local rental rates. '17

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

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

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

644

645 **COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS**

646 **Cover Crop Program**

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

- 649 (1) It should be made permanent. '07
650 (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs '10
651 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '17
652 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is
653 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
654 (5) Farmers should receive the same cover crop payment for manure incorporated land that
655 they would be paid for no till land, due to new manure incorporation requirements. '13
656 (6) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain
657 crops and hay acreage. '07
658 (7) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
659 (8) It should allow flexible planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '13
660 (9) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast
661 seeding. '07
662 (10) Aerial seeding should be funded as all other methods of seeding and should not exclude
663 double crop acres. '14
664 (11) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it
665 on the farm. '18
666 (12) The annual signup date for the program should be from June 1st through September 1st.
667 '12
668 (13) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested,
669 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09
670 (14) Fields should be allowed to contain blends of different cover crops if a nitrogen scavenger
671 crop is included in the blends. This should include the addition of legumes to such blends. '12
672 (15) Change seeding rates mandated for the cereal species that currently exist to be in
673 accordance with current University of Maryland Extension research findings. '12
674 (16) Give the option to adjust seeding rates and planting methods to facilitate late season
675 termination, green planting, intercropping, or relay cropping as an alternative to cover crop
676 burndown. '16
677 (17) Seeding rate should be calculated using germination rate and size of seed to achieve a
678 number of viable seeds per acre. '17
679 (18) Add sorghum to the eligible standing crops that the \$10 bonus aerial application for cover
680 crop can be seeded into. '19
681 (19) Recommend that MDA issue the first cover crop split payment before December 15th and
682 any final payments within 15 days after the crop termination report has been submitted. '19
683 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program.
684 '10
685 Maryland farmers and/or Ag organizations should have input on cover crop program
686 and rate changes before those changes are implemented. '14
687 **Cost Share Programs**
688 Cost share programs need to expand to include small animal unit operations. '14
689 We recommend the flat rates and components of a practice be reviewed and revised
690 annually with agricultural input to reflect current cost. '14
691 Maryland farmers/agricultural organizations should have input into state cost share
692 program changes before those changes are implemented. '14
693 We recommend that NRCS, Soil Conservation District and Maryland Department of
694 Agriculture resources be increased, and/or the approval process be streamlined to reduce a
695 backlog of cost share applications. '16

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

697 '17

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

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

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

704

705

CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

719

720

CROP PROTECTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

743 We oppose the establishment of a pesticide use data reporting system that would make
744 information available to the public or to “interested” researchers. ’19

745 **Disease Prevention & Pest Control**

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

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

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

754 **Environmental Surcharge**

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

757 **Pesticide Stewardship**

758 We support participating in a Pesticide Stewardship Education program with MDA,
759 Extension and other commodity groups for educational outreach geared towards consumers.
760 ’19

761

762 **CYBER SECURITY FOR THE FOOD CHAIN**

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

765

766 **DAIRY INDUSTRY**

767 We strongly support the combined efforts of Maryland Farm Bureau with the MD Dairy
768 Industry Association and the Dairy Industry Advisory Council to develop a program that will
769 enhance the transparency of the pricing of milk to producers, raise milk prices, and increase the
770 stability and viability of the dairy industry in Maryland. ’17

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

773 We support the Maryland Dairy Industry Association and urge farmers to join. ’17

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

776 **Milk Marketing**

777 Maintaining consumer confidence in dairy products is critical to the viability of the dairy
778 industry. Dairy product labeling should be truthful, accurate and be able to be substantiated.
779 ’17

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

783 All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as “raw milk” only. ’17

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

785 We support placing milk vending machines in all schools. ’17

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

788 We urge Maryland Public Schools to add a minimum of 1% flavored milk to the food
789 options. ’18

790 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

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

792 We support current Maryland Law for the prohibition of raw milk sales. We support
793 legislation that would prohibit the use of cattle-share or farm-share agreements to circumvent
794 existing raw milk sales laws. '17

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

797

798 **DREDGE SPOIL**

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

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

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

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

806

807 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

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

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

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

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

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

818

819 **ENERGY POLICY**

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

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

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

826 We urge that farm rates and demand charges be comparable across electric providers.
827 '19

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

829 **Ethanol & Biodiesel Fuel**

830 We support an energy independence and efficiency policy to include: (1) site approval,
831 environmental issues, funding, and approval of renewable energy sources; (2) the use of
832 renewable fuels in county, state, and federal automobile fleets; (3) support for the construction
833 of ethanol and biofuels plants in Maryland; and (4) support for production and use incentives
834 for ethanol and biodiesel. '19

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

854 **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

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

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

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

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

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

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

868 We oppose the use of "farm" when referring to an alternative energy generation facility.
869 '19

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

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

874 We support further study of the economic merit of Agrivoltaics and impacts of increased
875 solar to the energy grid. '22

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

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

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

882 **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

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

885 **Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS)**

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

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

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

892

893 **ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING**

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

896

897 **EQUINE INDUSTRY**

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

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

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

905 We support the creation of incentives to horse owners to work with the Ag agencies
906 that offer technical assistance for implementing conservation and best management practices.
907 '18

908

909 **FAMILY VALUES**

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

915

916 **FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES**

917 We recommend that the State FSA Administration grant more power to the county
918 committees to adequately staff county offices. '07

919 We recommend more farmer input on FSA office closures before any implementation
920 occurs. '05

921 We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and
922 consolidation of offices and services. '14

923

924 **FOREST CONSERVATION**

925 We oppose any new publicly funded afforestation projects in Maryland that does not
926 include a plan for the following: wildlife control, noxious weed control, and forest management.
927 '21

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

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

932

933 **GAMBLING**

934 We support that a portion of gaming proceeds continue to be utilized to supplement the
935 purse and bred fund accounts. We support licensed video gaming and gambling at racetracks
936 and/or other facilities and that a minimum of 25% of the total net revenue from these sources
937 be used to supplement the purse and Maryland Bred Fund accounts to equal the average dollar
938 value of the three highest states in the Purse and Breeding bonus accounts. Any expansion into
939 other forms of gambling such as table games and sports book like Video Lottery Terminals
940 (VLTs) should benefit the equine industry and agricultural education programs. '15

941 We urge the state legislature to designate a portion of the education funds generated
942 from the VLT's to Ag Education programs and be administered by MAEF. '15

943

944

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

945 We support the production and use of GMO products. We encourage the education of
946 government officials and the public on the product safety, economic benefits, and
947 environmental benefits of GMOs. '07

948 We oppose legislation that would restrict the use of GMO commodities grown in the
949 state. '12

950 We support GMO policy decisions only at the federal government level and not at the
951 state government level '15

952 We oppose state mandated labeling of products made with GMO crops. '15

953

954

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS – STATE GOVERNMENT

955 **Elected Officials**

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

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

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

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

963 **Ethics**

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

966 **Government Spending**

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

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

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

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

974 We encourage State and Local agencies and institutions to purchase all types of
975 Maryland agricultural commodities and products. '19

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

979 **Maryland Department of Agriculture**

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

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

985 **Regulatory Reform**

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

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

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

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

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

999 Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said
1000 regulations. '19

1001 We strongly recommend that all State agencies review their rules and regulations that
1002 affect the agriculture industry and modify and/or eliminate those that are outdated or serve no
1003 purpose. '19

1004 Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and
1005 scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry
1006 industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All
1007 regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis. '19

1008 The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR)
1009 Committee should have the authority to prevent a proposed regulation from being
1010 implemented. The Committee should be able to refer controversial proposals to the full
1011 General Assembly for a vote or for amendment before an agency can implement the proposed
1012 regulation. '19

1013 **State and Local Agencies**

1014 We support mental health programs and services to the Agricultural Community that
1015 provide education and information on where to obtain mental health services. '19

1016 We support the co-location of Ag agencies, Ag education and resources in regional Ag
1017 centers when feasible. '19

1018 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '19

1019 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
1020 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the

1021 Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict
1022 the access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on
1023 private property to no greater than law enforcement agencies. '19

1024 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
1025 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
1026 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate
1027 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
1028 practices. '19

1029 **State-Owned Farmland**

1030 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
1031 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
1032 converted to conservation uses. '19

1033 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

1034 Considering the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension
1035 program to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the
1036 present state pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '19

1037

1038 **GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

1039 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We
1040 recognize the value of urban greenways but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural
1041 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with
1042 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or
1043 rails to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that
1044 adjoins the proposed greenway before a study commences.'07

1045 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any
1046 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the
1047 opportunity for input. Also, the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail
1048 use on the safety, health, security, privacy, and economic interests of the adjacent landowners
1049 and determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail
1050 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,
1051 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use
1052 of the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for
1053 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers.'10

1054

1055 **GYPSY MOTH CONTROL**

1056 We recommend that the state gypsy moth control program be maintained at a 250 egg
1057 masses per acre baseline. '18

1058

1059 **INSURANCE**

1060 **Crop Insurance**

1061 We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a
1062 tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. '07

1063 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

1064 Health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-
1065 employed individuals. '13

1066 We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated
1067 health insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits to better manage health
1068 insurance costs. '05

1069 We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge
1070 the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of
1071 quality health care. '13

1072 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent
1073 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.'06

1074 We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits
1075 to long-term care insurance. '10

1076 **Insurance Rates**

1077 We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates
1078 throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on
1079 experience ratings. '05

1080 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry because
1081 of claims that are considered "Act of God" incidents. '16

1082 We strongly oppose the increase of unemployment insurance rates to pay for the
1083 unemployment due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We support repaying the unemployment
1084 insurance trust fund with federal COVID funding. '21

1085

1086 **JOHNE'S DISEASE**

1087 We acknowledge that the Maryland Department of Agriculture has made progress with
1088 the Johnes program and request continued support for it. '05

1089

1090 **LABOR STANDARDS**

1091 We oppose overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. '14

1092 We support maximum opportunities for youth to work on farms. We believe youth gain
1093 important life skills, learn safety around animals and equipment, benefit from involvement in
1094 programs like 4-H and FFA, become interested in careers in agriculture, better understand that
1095 farmers are professionals and use best management practices, and establish a strong work
1096 ethic. Therefore, we urge government not to limit these opportunities. '12

1097 We support the passage of legislation to exempt agriculture workers and point of sale
1098 workers in agriculture from minimum wage increase requirements. '20

1099

1100 **LAND STEWARDSHIP**

1101 Realizing that stewardship of the earth is in the public interest, we support the
1102 recognition of agriculture as a proper and environmentally sound use of our land resources. '06

1103

1104 **LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING**

1105 **Annexation**

1106 Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations
1107 within the county. '22

1108 **Growth Management**

1109 We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations
1110 within our state. '22

1111 We oppose any state policy that overrides county planning and zoning authority. '22

1112 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.
1113 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural
1114 counties. '22

1115 Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's
1116 property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '22

1117 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).
1118 '22

1119 **Permitting**

1120 We support the exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building permits,
1121 storm water management regulation, and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the
1122 zoning code. We further support the inclusion of specific language in the building code to
1123 permit public access to existing, structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated
1124 upgrades to the full current codes. '22

1125 **Zoning**

1126 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their
1127 efforts to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners
1128 involved should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria
1129 changes. Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall
1130 provide for just compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no down zoning on
1131 agriculture land. '22

1132 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '22

1133 Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or
1134 default. '22

1135

1136

LAW ENFORCEMENT

1137 **Penalties & Confinement**

1138 We urge the state to increase penalties for defacing and removal of "Mason-Dixon Line"
1139 markers. '05

1140 We favor adequate prison facilities so that inmates can serve their sentences. We
1141 recommend that inmates in minimum security penal complexes be required to work on
1142 highways, prison farms or other public projects to help defray the cost of their food and
1143 support and to pay restitution to their victims. We also favor emphasis on the rehabilitation of
1144 persons confined to penal institutions to afford them a better opportunity to assume a
1145 constructive role in society. '06

1146 We believe that the State of Maryland should enact legislation providing for a
1147 mandatory life sentence without parole, or a death sentence, for violent murder offenses and
1148 murder offenses occurring during the illegal transportation and/or distribution of controlled
1149 dangerous substances (drugs). '05

1150 We urge the Department of Corrections to return prisoners to their county of origin
1151 after the completion of their sentence before their release. '07

1152 We support legislation that would prevent elected officials from holding office if
1153 convicted of a crime or of misconduct in office and from receiving pensions or benefits
1154 pertaining to the office that they held. '06

1155 **Judicial Process**

1156 We recommend that the defendants be brought to a speedy trial and if convicted, given
1157 a sentence sufficient to discourage further crimes. We support consistency in judicial
1158 sentencing for all. '07

1159 We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity
1160 defense of “innocent by reason of insanity” to “guilty, but insane.” ’05

1161 **Investigation of Crimes**

1162 We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between
1163 jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. ’07

1164 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who
1165 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.’06

1166 To deter copper thefts, we propose a mandatory waiting period between the sale and
1167 the payment for certain salvaged material. ’11

1168 We support increasing the penalties for, and the efforts to investigate and prosecute,
1169 agriculture and aquaculture related crimes including, but not limited to, dumping of residential
1170 and commercial trash and waste materials on private property. ’21

1171 We support maintaining adequate police force funding to fully meet the
1172 needs of rural communities and agricultural producers. ’20

1173

1174 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

1175 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law
1176 and its regulations on Maryland’s rural property owners. ’07

1177

1178 **LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS**

1179 The State of Maryland should institute policy whereby unsuccessful plaintiffs initiating
1180 litigation against farm operations in Maryland shall be liable for the defendant’s legal fees and
1181 appropriate damages if the defendant prevails in the course of the suit.’12

1182 **Contributory Negligence**

1183 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock
1184 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a
1185 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party’s
1186 responsible actions. ’04

1187 **Agricultural Immunity**

1188 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. ’06

1189 We support immunity from liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers to afford
1190 the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. ’14

1191

1192 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

1193 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public
1194 monies.’06

1195

1196 **LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY**

1197 Government officials and inspectors must be required to always follow stringent
1198 biosecurity practices and respect private property rights when visiting farms. ’17

1199 We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. ’17

1200 We urge MDA to work with USDA to review and clarify the tagging process under the
1201 Premise ID program for all livestock producers. ’17

1202

1203 **LOCAL/TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

1204 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. ’08

1205 We support the State of Maryland increasing funding to the Tri-County Councils for the
1206 purpose of including and funding agricultural and natural resources development in their
1207 mission. '20

1208

1209

MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP

1210 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow hemp as an agricultural crop. '19

1211 We oppose the production and sale of recreational marijuana. '19

1212 We support increasing the legal THC content of industrial hemp to one percent. '22

1213

1214

MOSQUITO CONTROL

1215 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the

1216 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as

1217 necessary, including the purchase of needed equipment. '15

1218

1219

NONTIDAL WETLANDS

1220 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should

1221 be deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly

1222 compensated." '22

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NOXIOUS WEEDS

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Noxious Weed List

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Enforcement

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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

1252 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1253 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1254 non-crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all the control methods outlined by the
1255 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: “mowing, spraying and cultivation.” ’18

1256 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1257 conservation programs, so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1258 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. ’18

1259 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop procedures for adding
1260 new weeds to the noxious weed list. These procedures should include an estimate of the cost
1261 to control the weed. ’18

1262 **Public Education**

1263 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1264 public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of noxious weeds. ’18

1265 **Weed Control Methods**

1266 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1267 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and
1268 eliminate these noxious weeds. ’18

1269 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious
1270 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will
1271 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination. ’18

1272 We support the state providing cost share for control of noxious weeds and other weeds
1273 of concern. ’18

1274 We support counties and the state to work with HOAs, Forest Conservation Easements
1275 and Storm Water Management Areas to control their noxious weeds and weeds of concern. ’18

1276 **Weeds of Concern**

1277 We urge MDA in cooperation with University of Maryland Extension to create a weeds
1278 of concern program that identifies new or herbicide resistant weeds of concern, educates state
1279 agencies, landowners, and farmers on how to identify and manage these weeds, and
1280 encourages state agencies, landowners and farmers to implement best management practices
1281 to control these weeds. ’18

1282

1283 **NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**

1284 **Nutrient Management for Farms**

1285 We support nutrient management programs and that all farmers should apply nutrients
1286 in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound science. ’21

1287 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of
1288 nutrient management plans. ’09

1289 We support a nutrient management program that: (1) produces real water quality
1290 improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3) requires reasonable recordkeeping,
1291 (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5) provides adequate flexibility for
1292 farmers to properly manage their operations, (6) provides appropriate inspection and
1293 enforcement, and (7) provides appropriate incentives to offset operating and capital costs
1294 incurred by complying with the requirements of the program. ’12

1295 We are opposed to the changes to the nutrient management regulations, which make
1296 MD agriculture less competitive by increasing the cost and difficulty of farming in Maryland
1297 without compensation. ’13

1298 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.

1299 '10

1300 We recommend that MDA and the University of Maryland review and update the
1301 nitrogen use recommendations in UMD's Numan Pro software program, which is used for
1302 nutrient management plans. '18

1303 We recommend the composting of animals be an approved method of disposing of
1304 animal mortalities on the farm. '17

1305 We oppose expanding the Phosphorus Management Tool beyond the current
1306 implementation. '21

1307 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient
1308 management program to achieve the following:

1309 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05

1310 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.
1311 '05

1312 c. Prevent yield capping. '05

1313 d. Allow the use of scientifically valid nutrient recommendations from the University of
1314 Maryland or other public and private sources. '18

1315 e. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12

1316 f. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on
1317 an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14

1318 g. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and
1319 technologies. '18

1320 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a
1321 farm based on a complaint. '09

1322 We support the optional on-line reporting system for Annual Implementation Reports
1323 (AIRs) but oppose that being the only option. '21

1324 **Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality**

1325 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain
1326 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately written nutrient
1327 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government
1328 entity. '10

1329 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date, they should
1330 be properly destroyed. '08

1331 **Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education**

1332 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1333 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '13

1334 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**

1335 We seek full funding for Nutrient Management Cost-Share for the development and
1336 updating of nutrient management plans by private industry and by University of Maryland
1337 Extension. All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '12

1338 We support continued funding for the University of Maryland Extension Nutrient
1339 Management Program in order to hire and maintain adequate, permanent nutrient
1340 management advisors in each county to provide nutrient management education and plan
1341 development. '21

1342 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1343 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1344 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1345 We strongly oppose the Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised
1346 Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by MDE. '12

1347 We oppose public hearings for CAFO permit renewals that do not include facility
1348 expansion or modification. '16

1349 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1350 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1351 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '11

1352 We strongly oppose any fee structure for reviewing or inspecting MAFO or CAFO
1353 operation by MDE. '14

1354 We support transferring the MAFO permitting program from MDE to MDA while
1355 decoupling the NPDES permitting process from the MAFO permit. '17

1356 We oppose air quality monitoring as a requirement for MAFO/CAFO permits. '21

1357 **Manure and Litter Management**

1358 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for
1359 crop production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '20

1360 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.
1361 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies – beyond those previously conducted by
1362 UMD researchers – that include different soil types, locations, and manure types before any
1363 ban on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1364 Universities within the Bay Watershed should collaboratively research the benefits of
1365 organic nutrients vs. commercial fertilizer on leachable soil types and soils with high water
1366 tables. '13

1367 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1368 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1369 We support diversion of manure from equine operations from going to county landfills.

1370 We encourage government funding of composting facilities. '18

1371 We oppose being required to field stack mushroom soil compost. '18

1372 We support adequate funding of the Manure Transport Program to assist with transport
1373 and movement of livestock manure and poultry litter to all parts of the State. '21

1374 **Soil Testing**

1375 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1376 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '13

1377

1378 **NUTRIENT/CARBON TRADING**

1379 We oppose government-mandated carbon sequestration or credit trading. '21

1380 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient and carbon reduction on both farms and
1381 forests that allow farmers and/or landowners to receive fair compensation for nutrient removal
1382 and/or carbon reductions. '21

1383 We support allowing Shellfish/Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for
1384 Maryland to meet its water quality goals. '16

1385 We oppose using the wastewater treatment plant's portion of the flush tax dollars to
1386 jump start a Maryland nutrient trading program. '16

1387

1388 **POULTRY INDUSTRY**

1389 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter.
1390 '17

1391 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a
1392 cost-share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the
1393 mandatory covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '17
1394 We oppose any effort to mandate moving poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '17
1395 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy
1396 generation. '17
1397 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1398 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere
1399 in the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '17
1400 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research-based guidelines for field
1401 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1402 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '17
1403 We oppose government regulations that would require chicken grower/poultry
1404 company layout policies. '17
1405 We support Delmarva Chicken Association's (DCA) best management practices for good
1406 neighbor relations, which cover house location on property, manure handling practices, carcass
1407 disposal system, vegetative buffers, odor prevention & control, and contact with neighbors. '21
1408 We oppose state mandated air quality monitoring or air filtering on poultry houses over
1409 and above DCA's best management practices for good neighbor relations. '21
1410

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

1411 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1412 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner. '07
1413 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production
1414 of an agricultural commodity on farmland. '07
1415 We oppose any mandatory retirement of land for buffers and setbacks. '12
1416 Government action that diminishes a property's value or an owner's right to use his
1417 property constitutes a taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should
1418 provide due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been
1419 diminished. The just basis for compensation must be at least fair market value. '14
1420 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and
1421 state levels. '07
1422 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the
1423 party disputing any property lines. '06
1424 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to
1425 notify all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified
1426 letter, in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '11
1427

Eminent Domain

1428 We believe the Supreme Court "Kelo" decision violates the basic principles and
1429 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1430 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1431 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We
1432 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and
1433 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of
1434 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1435 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop.
1436 '06
1437

1438 We urge the elimination of the “quick take” condemnation process. ’12
1439 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1440 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1441 property.’10

1442 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.
1443 ’06

1444 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for
1445 the purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original
1446 landowner or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other
1447 than for which it was originally acquired. ’05

1448 We urge that the compensation must include the total devaluation of the farm due to
1449 the negative impact, including visual, of any eminent domain project. ’17

1450

1451

PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS

1452 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1453 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of land being purchased in this
1454 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1455 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1456 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to
1457 use part or all their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1458 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1459 ’21

1460 We urge Program Open Space revenues that were diverted to the General Fund to be
1461 repaid. We support using a portion of these repaid funds to be used to increase wildlife
1462 management in the state. This could include state cost share for vegetative fencing/sacrificial
1463 crops and wildlife fencing. ’21

1464 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1465 present state-owned land rather than the acquisition of new land. ’21

1466 We urge diverting a portion of the open space funds to be used for managing wildlife on
1467 state owned land. ’21

1468 We urge that the open space program continue to receive 0.5% of the Maryland real
1469 estate transfer tax. ’21

1470

1471

PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS

1472 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1473 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding.’07

1474 Also, we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property
1475 owners of the easement rights of the PDA.’06

1476 We oppose any effort to usurp control of PDA maintenance from the PDA managers.
1477 Any federal, state, or private conservation practices should not prevent, hinder, or interfere
1478 with the maintenance of the PDA main, tributary, or right of way. ’18

1479

1480

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

1481 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1482 present to the public of the state. We urge the State and County health departments to gather
1483 as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs, and treatment of
1484 these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information. ’06

1485 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1486 problem to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state. '06
1487 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1488 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08
1489

PUBLIC OWNED LAND

1491 Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in
1492 production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '18

1493 We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to
1494 acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to
1495 parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by
1496 willing sellers only. '18

1497 In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the
1498 governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges, and wild lands to
1499 determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate
1500 the sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '18

1501 The state should compensate counties for the loss of property tax revenue on public
1502 lands. '18

1503 We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or
1504 other recreational uses to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and administering these
1505 lands. '18

1506 We urge the state to require and implement a wildlife management plan for all public,
1507 wild and forest land. '18

Timberland Management

1509 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use
1510 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting
1511 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '18
1512

PUBLIC RELATIONS

1514 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome, and most affordable food in the
1515 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the
1516 media unless substantiated and accurate. '08

1517 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.
1518 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based
1519 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors, and
1520 subsequent retailers. '08

1521 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and
1522 information regarding the local farm community. '08

1523 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the
1524 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland
1525 agriculture to the public through various media outlets. '08

1526 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that
1527 would:

- 1528 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1529 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1530 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the
1531 environment.

- 1532 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals, and educational displays.
1533 5. Include a speaker's bureau.'08
1534 We encourage state, county, and local government officials to take a more active role in
1535 supporting, promoting, and defending agriculture. '09

1536
1537 **RAILROADS**

1538 government to take whatever action necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade
1539 them where necessary, including adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

1540
1541 **RECYCLING**

1542 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury
1543 to animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that
1544 would require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we
1545 recommend that a sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for
1546 recycling. '13

1547 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we
1548 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics.'07

1549 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '16

1550 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials,
1551 as well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

1552 **Tire Fund & Tire Recycling**

1553 The state Tire Fund collection program should be expanded to include a program that
1554 would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state annually. '16

1555
1556 **RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS**

1557 When a utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be
1558 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.
1559 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be
1560 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary because of building waterways,
1561 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground where possible
1562 and that the areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars, and
1563 weeds by the utility company.'06

1564 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights of way or property lines
1565 when feasible.'05

1566 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used
1567 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the
1568 underlying property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be
1569 returned to adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee
1570 simple, the property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first
1571 refusal upon abandonment. '07

1572 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail
1573 use, and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will
1574 preserve the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. '09

1575 We oppose the taking of additional "Right of Way" to add "Bicycle" lanes to county or
1576 state highways. '15

1577

1578 **RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS**

1579 We believe in and support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which
1580 protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms. '15

1581 We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by
1582 law-abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, long arm, autoloader, or manual loader.
1583 Furthermore, we are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition. '15

1584
1585 **RIGHT-TO-FARM**

1586 To maintain the right to farm, we recognize our individual responsibility as farmers to
1587 help maintain the positive image of the ag industry by being respectful and courteous
1588 neighbors. '20

1589 We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect
1590 the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce
1591 without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to
1592 ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal
1593 production practices and agritourism activities. '22

1594 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland "Right-to-Farm" Law and recommend that it
1595 should be strengthened to protect and promote the enhancement of all commodities. '20

1596 We support an amendment to Maryland's Constitution recognizing that agriculture,
1597 which provides food, energy, health benefits, and security, is the foundation and stabilizing
1598 force of Maryland's economy. To protect this vital sector of Maryland's economy, the right of
1599 farmers to engage in farming practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state. '20

1600 Recognizing that agriculture is an essential industry, we recommend that right-to-farm
1601 laws extend to the ag-supported industry and supply chain. '20

1602 Before entering the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the
1603 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review to settle the nuisance
1604 complaint between the affected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in nuisance
1605 complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '20

1606 Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead
1607 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '20

1608 We support an amendment to the definition of a "commercial fishing or seafood
1609 operation" in the Right to Farm law to include the word "growing." '20

1610 **Funding to Protect Farms**

1611 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1612 environmental suits filed against farmers. '20

1613 **Right to Repair**

1614 We support legislation requiring agricultural equipment manufacturers to make
1615 available the necessary documents, software, and information to allow independent shops and
1616 individuals to repair equipment. '20

1617
1618 **RIPARIAN BUFFERS**

1619 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis. '22
1620 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1621 use. '22

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

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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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1668 We urge the State Highway Administration and counties to proceed with urgently
1669 needed road construction projects as rural roads need to be maintained to a higher standard
1670 for the safety of our farmers and our residents. '22

1671 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project
1672 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land
1673 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has
1674 been initiated. '08

1675 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

1676 **Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)**

1677 We urge a change in the law to mandate the trimming of tree limbs on both new growth
1678 and existing trees for safe travel of all vehicles on roadways. '11

1679 We support state legislation that requires, on both state and county roads, trees and
1680 brush be maintained at a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge and to a clearance of at
1681 least 18 feet across the full maintenance width of all public roads. Further, we recommend the
1682 placement of new poles and guide wires at a minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge, with
1683 reflective material placed thereon. '22

1684 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1685 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and enhance scenic views.'12

1686 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments control invasive species
1687 and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '17

1688 The government should increase the level of maintenance to ensure safe passage of
1689 vehicles.'12

1690 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1691 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of
1692 the tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous, and diseased
1693 trees.'12

1694 We highly recommend that State Highway Administration (SHA) send at least a 6-month
1695 notice to adjacent landowners whenever plantings are being proposed along SHA rights-of-way
1696 that are currently in agricultural production. '15

1697 We urge the State Highway Administration to accommodate the movement of farm
1698 equipment into fields in agricultural production when installing right of way projects. '17

1699 We strongly encourage SHA to continue to allow farming on these rights-of-way and
1700 work with farmers to find other suitable sites for plantings on adjacent land. '15

1701 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1702 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the
1703 trimming and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and
1704 simplify the permit process. '10

1705

1706 **RURAL COMMUNITIES**

1707 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was created
1708 to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13

1709 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
1710 county governments during the legislative session. '13

1711 We strongly support legislation defining rural broadband/internet as a public necessity.
1712 '20

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RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM

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

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

SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

School Standards

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

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

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

School Lunches & Farm to School Program

We support the state's Farm-to-School program and recommend funding be increased. We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote this program and purchase more locally grown products for school nutrition programs. '17

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

1760 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished
1761 land value incurred by any septic legislation. '11

1762

1763 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1764 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
1765 the federal Class A standard. '07

1766 We oppose any legislation that would allow biosolids utilized on farmland to be less
1767 restrictive than the standards outlined in MDA's 2012 Nutrient Management Guidelines. While
1768 we recognize that biosolids are an excellent source of natural fertilizer, we believe it should be
1769 utilized under the same standards as farm-produced natural fertilizer. '12

1770 We recommend that MDA classify dissolved air flotation (DAF) from poultry processing
1771 plant effluent as a biosolid. '19

1772 We support continued research and public education into sludge use to assure proper
1773 application rates and practices that protect farmland. '14

1774 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
1775 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability
1776 and potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be
1777 imported into Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '08

1778 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be
1779 held accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
1780 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator. '08

1781

1782 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a
1783 composite test be taken and recorded each day.'07

1784 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
1785 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'07

1786 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
1787 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '05

1788 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
1789 that are more restrictive than State standards. '09

1790

1791 **STATE DESIGNATIONS**

1792 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1793 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts
1794 to change this designation. '07

1795

1796 **STRAY VOLTAGE**

1797 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies
1798 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and
1799 livestock. '07

1800

1801 **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

1802 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that
1803 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

1804 1. It must be profitable for farmers. '08

1805 2. It must work to conserve soil, water, and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08

1806 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08

- 1807 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08
1808 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture.
1809 '08
1810 6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency.
1811 '10
1812 7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic or regenerative farming practices. '19
1813

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

1854 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings including tenant houses. '22
1855 We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings. '22
1856 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
1857 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '22
1858 Farms operating on-farm food processing, alcohol production, agritourism, and value-
1859 added production businesses along with the buildings associated with these activities should be
1860 assessed at the agricultural use tax rate. '22

1861 **Sales and Use Taxes**

1862 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
1863 related services from the state sales tax. '22

1864 To clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases, we
1865 recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt
1866 card. '22

1867 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '22

1868 We support exempting electric use on farms from the sales and use tax. '22

1869 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1870 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
1871 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
1872 operation or structure. '22

1873 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1874 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as
1875 general fund enhancements. '22

1876

1877

TIMBER HARVESTING

1878 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1879 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest
1880 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1881 basis. '07

1882 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state
1883 and county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1884 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '12

1885 No conservation easement should prohibit timber harvest. '14

1886

1887

TOBACCO

1888 **Master Settlement Agreement**

1889 We recommend that as the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is reviewed by the
1890 General Assembly each year the amount to be secured for the Southern Maryland farmers be at
1891 least kept at a minimum of 5% according to the original settlement agreement. '08

1892 We recommend that if the General Assembly does not secure at least 5% of the Master
1893 Settlement Agreement for Southern Maryland farmers, those farmers who accepted the
1894 conditions of the Tobacco Buyout be relieved of those restrictions in total and be able to
1895 produce tobacco once again for sale on a market basis. '13

1896 **Tobacco Industry**

1897 We urge the state to rescind the restriction on the use of tobacco barns as stated in the
1898 Tobacco Buyout Contract. '06

1899 The State Tobacco Warehouse located in Cheltenham, Maryland, was built entirely using
1900 funds derived from tobacco farmers. Therefore, we urge the Maryland Department of

1901 Agriculture to always consider any agricultural use as its top priority and leasing only be
1902 considered as a secondary use. '06

1903 **Tobacco Taxes**

1904 We oppose any increase in taxes on tobacco products. '09

1905

1906 **TRESPASSING**

1907 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.

1908 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
1909 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
1910 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
1911 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
1912 injury sustained by trespassers. '13

1913 The maximum fine should be raised to \$5,000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
1914 destruction of property. '18

1915 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
1916 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs
1917 or paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission
1918 and to know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private
1919 land. '06

1920 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a
1921 jail term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine if a minor is convicted. The
1922 offender should be required to pay the property owner three times the amount of destruction
1923 including time loss and all court cost. '14

1924 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
1925 by others without written permission of up to \$5,000.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up
1926 to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore,
1927 violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '18

1928 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
1929 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
1930 existing laws and regulations.'07

1931 **Unmanned Aerial Systems**

1932 We request legislation be enacted so that no person, entity, or state agency shall use a
1933 manned aircraft, drone, or unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance or observation under the
1934 doctrine of open fields of any individual, property owned by an individual, farm, or agricultural
1935 industry without the consent of that individual, property owner, farm, or agricultural industry.
1936 '13

1937 We support the use of unmanned aerial systems in agricultural businesses provided
1938 written permission is obtained from the property owner. '14

1939

1940 **TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES**

1941 To achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1942 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion
1943 of this program; '08

1944 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient
1945 runoff into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban
1946 areas, as well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E., deicing
1947 aircraft and parking lots); '08

1948 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific
1949 research, as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately
1950 result in the Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1951 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with
1952 maximum cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the
1953 purchase of equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1954 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay to increase
1955 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '08

1956 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
1957 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08

1958

1959

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY

Bicycle Safety

1960 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
1961 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '20

1962 We recommend that scheduled bicycle, running or similar recreational events be
1963 conducted in a manner that does not inhibit agricultural activities. '20

1964 All bicycles should be required to have front and rear flashing lights and the rider wear
1965 bright and reflective clothing while riding. '20

Driver Safety Rules

1966 We oppose any legislation to increase the age to obtain a driver's license.'20

Infrastructure Needs

1967 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
1968 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '20

1969 We support the improvements to all Maryland Interstates.'20

Inspections

1970 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
1971 motor vehicles.'20

1972 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.'20

Safe Movement of Farm Equipment

1973 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of farmers. '20

1974 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the
1975 proper use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend
1976 that a mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to
1977 aid in recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and
1978 roads to improve safety conditions. '20

1979 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow-moving vehicle signs for any
1980 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced. '20

1981 We recommend Maryland State Highway Administration use the digital messaging signs
1982 to warn motorists of agricultural equipment use on highways during spring planting season,
1983 summer small grain harvest and fall grain harvest. '20

1984 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
1985 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
1986 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are
1987 (1) properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped
1988 approached another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the
1989

1994 “other driver” being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her
1995 vehicle. '20

1996 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
1997 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
1998 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '20

1999 **Truck Regulations**

2000 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent
2001 with those of neighboring states. '20

2002 We support the K Tag radius being 25 miles or more. '20

2003 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal, but an axle weight is off, enforcement
2004 personnel should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '20

2005 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products
2006 up to 25 miles. '20

2007 Farm trucks should be considered “local vehicles” with respect to traffic laws.'20

2008 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
2009 agricultural or commercial traffic on state highways. '20

2010 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
2011 '20

2012 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '20

2013 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
2014 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive
2015 Maintenance Program. '20

2016 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
2017 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should
2018 be established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time
2019 periods to get them repaired. '20

2020 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. '20

2021 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within
2022 each class. '20

2023 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
2024 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
2025 transportation of farm commodities. '20

2026 We support the right of farmers to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers in any
2027 state where it is legal to do so. We further support the right of farmers to employ a title service
2028 agency or agent operating outside of Maryland to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers
2029 in any state where it is legal to do so. '20

2030

2031 **UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND**

2032 **Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority**

2033 We recommend the University System of Maryland establish an Ag Producers Board of
2034 Advisors. '21

2035 We recommend to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
2036 University of Maryland College Park that they establish an Ag Producers Board of Advisors that
2037 includes a MDFB representative. '21

2038 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
2039 but not at the expense of "traditional agriculture" courses and research. '21

2040 We urge the University System of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional
2041 research as is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support
2042 University of Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education
2043 programs. '21

2044 We recommend the reestablishment of the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to
2045 advise and assist the UMD Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future
2046 structure of UMD Extension. This committee should consist of commodity groups and
2047 stakeholders to represent the different geographic regions of the state. '15

2048 We support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and
2049 its tripartite mission of research, teaching, and extension. Because of the many challenges for
2050 Agriculture in the future, which cannot be met without qualified graduates, we urge curricula
2051 for students who aspire to be the future farmers, agriculture leaders, ag teachers, extension
2052 agents, scientists, and more. '21

2053 We urge the University System of Maryland to fill and support faculty positions relevant
2054 to the Maryland agriculture industry needs. '21

2055 **Funding**

2056 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
2057 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
2058 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
2059 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
2060 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
2061 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '13

2062 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
2063 for funding the University of Maryland Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We
2064 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable
2065 funding support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the
2066 University. '21

2067 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

2068 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which aids farmers for
2069 business plan development. We request staffing to continue this valuable program. '21

2070 **Law School/Litigation**

2071 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
2072 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
2073 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state
2074 clients. Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm
2075 business should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being
2076 accepted by the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should
2077 provide equal representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '13

2078 **Research and Data**

2079 We urge the University of Maryland and the MDA to conduct further research on small
2080 grain crops that will maximize yields while utilizing fertilizers in the best ways for both plant
2081 uptake and environmental benefits. '12

2082 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
2083 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system so that
2084 research is more readily available to the producers. '21

2085 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
2086 varieties of vegetables, fruits, and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase
2087 competition with other areas of the country. '08

2088 We urge the University to continue the "Field Days" at the research farms. '21

2089 **Teacher Preparation**

2090 We recommend the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural
2091 Resources to continue to develop and expand the current program that provides an Agricultural
2092 Education major, giving students a specialization in Ag Education leading to a career path as an
2093 agricultural educator and/or extension educator. We support allocating new resources to the
2094 program. '21

2095 **Tuition**

2096 We urge tuition increases at the schools within the University System of Maryland be
2097 limited to the cost-of-living index. '21

2098 **University of Maryland Extension**

2099 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
2100 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
2101 compete in a competitive marketplace. The strength of Extension has always been at the local
2102 level. We strongly urge that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
2103 Agent/Educator. '21

2104 We strongly urge Area Extension director positions be eliminated and replaced by
2105 previous system of County Extension Directors, and that these positions be filled by individuals
2106 that have an extension background and leadership experience. '21

2107 Due to agriculture's ever-increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
2108 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment
2109 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
2110 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
2111 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11

2112

2113 **URBAN FARMING/AGRICULTURE**

2114 We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture. '17

2115 We support modifying zoning laws to promote urban farming/agriculture and the right
2116 to farm within urban areas and city limits. '21

2117 We support ongoing skills development training in urban farming/agriculture for all
2118 ages. '21

2119 We support the expansion of urban farming/agriculture and the creation of a clear
2120 pathway to land ownership for urban farmers. '21

2121 We support grant programs to provide infrastructure for urban farming/agriculture. '21

2122 We support the use of Program Open Space funds to purchase easements on vacant lots
2123 and greenspaces within planned urban developments and city limits to be used for urban
2124 farming/agriculture. '21

2125

2126 **WILDLANDS**

2127 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
2128 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas
2129 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
2130 management plans. '08

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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

Bird Control

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

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

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

Black Bear

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

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

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

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

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

We support changes to the bear hunt which will grant landowners more equitable 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

2179 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
2180 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
2181 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '17

- 2182 (1) Regulate deer as a “varmint” species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '17
- 2183 (2) List Sika deer as an invasive species due to extreme crop damage. '17
- 2184 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
2185 seasons. '17
- 2186 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state’s deer herd
2187 population count. '17
- 2188 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
2189 areas. '17
- 2190 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
2191 herd. '17
- 2192 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '17
- 2193 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent
2194 to agricultural lands. '17
- 2195 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and
2196 processing harvested deer. '17
- 2197 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
2198 management. '17
- 2199 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
2200 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of
2201 deer population. '17

2202 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '17
2203 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
2204 tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17

2205 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a
2206 plan to manage and control wildlife populations. '17

2207 We support the “Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry” program and support an
2208 increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17

2209 **Deer Crop Damage**

2210 Any refusal or increase in RMA (Risk Management Agency) premiums, specifically due to
2211 deer crop damage should enable farmers to use increased methods of deer harvesting,
2212 including the night use of DMP’s (Deer Management Permits). '22

2213 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate
2214 enactment:

- 2215 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17
- 2216 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17
- 2217 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop
2218 within the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17
- 2219 (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17
- 2220 (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17
- 2221 (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
2222 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
- 2223 (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
2224 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
2225 disposing properly should be eliminated. '17

- 2226 (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to always use the weapon of
 2227 choice for filling Deer Management permits. '17
- 2228 (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
- 2229 (10) The commercial sale of venison from certified processing facilities. '17
- 2230 (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
- 2231 (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the
 2232 authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated
 2233 as such. '17
- 2234 (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be
 2235 deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17
- 2236 (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation
 2237 non-profit under a crop damage permit. '17
- 2238 (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to help deter crop
 2239 damage. '21

2240

Fox Chasing

2241 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from
 2242 landowners to conduct the hunt. '08

2243

Furbearers

2244 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

2245 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase
 2246 a stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any
 2247 fee. '08

2248 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

2249 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
 2250 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture
 2251 of fur-bearing wildlife. '10

2252 We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

2253 We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species like groundhogs if they
 2254 are causing property damage. '17

Hunting Ethics and Liability

2256 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
 2257 taking place. '07

2258 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
 2259 manner like motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record after
 2260 an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

2261 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
 2262 the maximum extent possible. '06

2263 Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by
 2264 hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting
 2265 activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in
 2266 safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established
 2267 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses

2269 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
 2270 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
 2271 regulations. '17

2272

2273 We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the
2274 purpose of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18
2275 We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands '17
2276 We support season-long Sunday hunting for the first 3 hours after sunrise in counties
2277 where Sunday hunting does not already exist. '17
2278 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
2279 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
2280 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
2281 during that season. '17
2282 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17
2283 We support extending the deer firearms hunting season through February. '21
2284 We support a longer firearm season on privately owned lands that overlaps the
2285 primitive weapon seasons that will maximize existing bag limits. '21
2286 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17
2287 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17
2288 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17
2289 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
2290 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren, and employees when hunting only on that
2291 property. We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and
2292 his/her spouse, children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural
2293 purposes (or a sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this
2294 farmland. We are opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license
2295 exemption to persons (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under
2296 the age of 16. '17
2297 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
2298 hunting or trapping privileges. '17
2299 **Waterfowl**
2300 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2301 Service to take all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow goose
2302 population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09
2303 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
2304 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07
2305 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
2306 throughout, starting about November 5th. '09
2307 We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on
2308 or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level
2309 consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14
2310 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
2311 increase in bag limits. '08
2312 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09
2313 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:
2314 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08
2315 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09
2316 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of
2317 property lines. '08
2318 We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows
2319 or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area to be charged with baiting. '14

2320 **Waterfowl Crop Damage**

2321 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

2322 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e., recorders or baiters) to
2323 reduce the snow goose population. '08

2324

2325 **YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

2326 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland
2327 through:

2328 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '20

2329 (2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '20

2330 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation
2331 easements; '20

2332 (4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

2333 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them; '20

2334 (6) Support and greater promotion of programs. '20

2335 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture
2336 to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '20