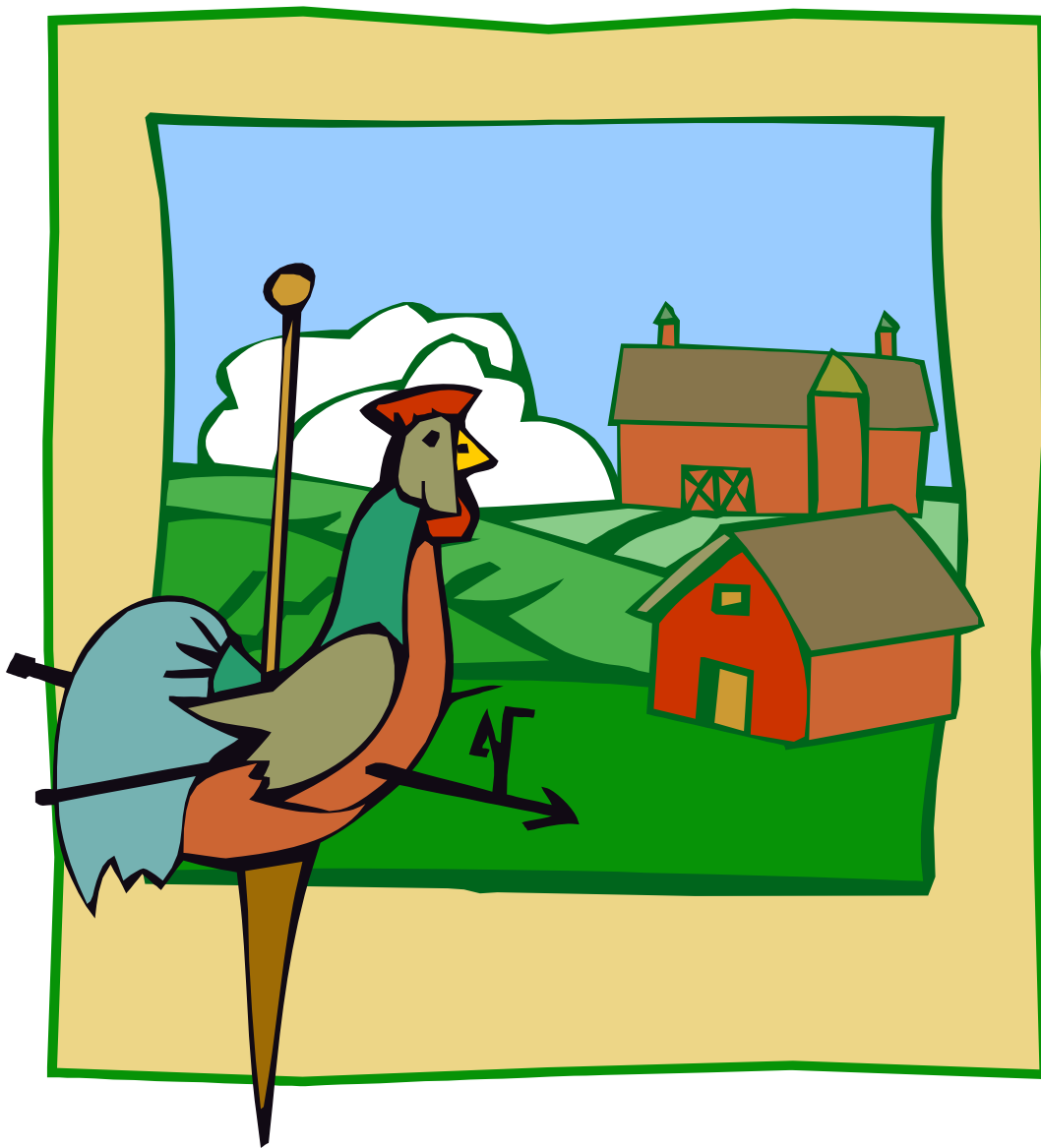




Maryland Farm Bureau Policy for 2012



As approved by the Voting Delegates at the 96th Annual Meeting on December 6, 2011

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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 is
5 non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-secret in character. It is organized to provide a means by
6 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 the people on the land. Farm families discuss issues,
10 talk them over in the community and make recommendations. County resolutions derived from
11 these community recommendations were adopted as policies on county issues and as
12 recommendations on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies herein
13 were derived from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm Bureau
14 policy for 2012 as set by voting delegates during the 96th annual convention of the Maryland
15 Farm Bureau on December 6, 2011.

16
17 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

18 **Community Colleges**

19 We urge the introduction or expansion of agricultural programs in the community
20 colleges throughout the state. '07

21 **Curriculum**

22 We support an effective, systematic instructional program about agriculture in our public
23 schools. We believe the curriculum should include "Introduction to Agriculture Science"
24 starting in the middle school and continuing into high school to generate awareness of the
25 importance of agriculture to our society and to ensure future generations of well-trained leaders
26 for the agricultural industry. '08

27 We urge the public schools to implement the Curriculum for Agricultural Science
28 Education (CASE) in at least one high school in each county. '10

29 We commend the Maryland Commission on Education in Agriculture for its study and
30 report concerning the enhancement of agricultural education in the state. We support the
31 Commission's recommendations to improve and enhance education in agricultural programs
32 throughout Maryland, especially the improved agricultural curriculum in Grades K-12 and the
33 recommendations for new and upgraded facilities. We encourage the continued efforts of the
34 Governor to expand and improve agricultural curriculum in the Maryland public school system.
35 '07

36 We oppose the expenditure of public funds to promote animal rights and the use of
37 educational materials in public schools that discourage the use of animal products. '06

38 **Environmental Requirements**

39 The public needs to be made aware of the importance of the preservation of agricultural
40 land for a totally healthy environment. We encourage more farm city festivals, including farm
41 tours and educational displays so the general public can have a better understanding of how food
42 is produced. '08

43 We recommend the new curriculum for the environmental requirement for graduation
44 should be reviewed by the MAEF Board and amended where necessary before being taught. '11

45 **Funding for MAEF**

46 We support the Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation and its efforts to receive
47 legislative funding from the state special fund appropriations and funding through grant-in-aid
48 from the Maryland State Department of Education. '06

49 We support the Maryland Ag Tag and we believe that all fees derived from sales should
50 continue to be used to support MAEF. '08

51 **Teacher Training**

52 We recommend that teacher-training units of Maryland public colleges include a mini-
53 course in agriculture, and that state educational sub-divisions include an in-service day or days to
54 instruct teachers and guidance counselors about agriculture. '05

55 **Vocational Education**

56 We support the vocational education program in Maryland. We recommend that local
57 boards of education, with state support, introduce an approved production agriculture program in
58 Maryland junior/senior or senior high schools. We strongly recommend that the State board of
59 education institute standards for vocational agricultural programs that include teaching
60 agriculture, ag economics and general agri-business.'05

61

62 **AGRICULTURAL FAIRS**

63 We support state level legislation to grant an exemption to all county Agricultural Fairs
64 from the provisions of noise control regulations that establish ambient noise levels and
65 equipment performance standards. '10

66 We support state laws and regulations that encourage viable agricultural practices and
67 encourage farmers to operate in a manner that would avoid endangering the safety of the general
68 public. We support an increase in funds to the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board to be used to
69 encourage, through promotion and assistance, agricultural fairs, 4-H exhibits, FFA and other
70 qualifying agricultural events. '06

71

72 **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION**

73 We support the concept of agricultural land preservation and urge all landowners to
74 acquaint themselves with the programs available and the benefits derived thereof. Furthermore,
75 we urge the state and county governments to continue to support the voluntary preservation of
76 agricultural land with substantial increases in funding. We encourage them to work with all
77 interested stakeholders to develop innovative voluntary programs that maximize farmland
78 preservation while protecting landowner equity and private property rights and not negatively
79 impacting any other rights running with the land. '06

80 We oppose taking productive agricultural land out of production for the purpose of
81 meeting requirements for forest conservation, buffers, and mitigation measures. The state should
82 conduct a survey to determine the loss of acreage of food producing land for these purposes.'11

83 We encourage neighboring counties to work cooperatively to achieve these goals
84 provided county sovereignty is respected and all planning and zoning decisions are made at the
85 county level. '04

86 We support the Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation and county preservation
87 boards in their efforts to preserve agricultural land throughout the state. Furthermore, we urge
88 that these boards maintain the right to select land eligible for easement sale with priority toward
89 creating large contiguous blocks of preserved land. '08

90 The decision to target priority farms should be left to the county's Agland preservation
91 board under the current MALPF funding formula. '10

92 **Ag Preservation Funding**

93 We urge additional funding by the state and counties for agland preservation programs,
94 including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program. Payments for
95 these programs should reflect current market values for farmland.'11

96 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '09

97 We support the issuance of bonds to fund agland preservation programs. '04

98 We oppose transfer and/or use of funds set aside for agricultural land preservation for
99 anything other than the preservation of farmland. '07

100 We support a line on state income tax returns to allow taxpayers to donate funds to the
101 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to preserve farmland. '07

102 We recommend the creation of a new Maryland lottery scratch with the proceeds going
103 towards Agland Preservation. '05

104 We urge the Maryland State Legislature to fully fund the Maryland Agricultural Land
105 Preservation Program. '07

106 Furthermore, we recommend that additional county and state incentives for participation
107 should be provided, such as property tax credits for agricultural district properties committed to a
108 term of five years or property tax credits on land where easements have been purchased, and the
109 enactment of a Maryland agricultural land property tax credit program as part of the contract. '09

110 **Appraisals**

111 We urge the state to use local appraisers who should base their appraisals on the recent
112 sale or transfer of property in the immediate vicinity. We also believe that the appraisers should
113 be required to successfully complete a course of study specifically on agricultural land appraisal
114 approved by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. Furthermore, appraisers
115 should be required to take into consideration the value of standing timber, the subdivision value
116 of any property, as well as the uniqueness of the metropolitan areas when making their
117 appraisals. '05

118 **Mapping**

119 We oppose the identification and inclusion of state and county ag land preservation
120 easement properties in land use and public facilities maps. Where so included and identified,
121 such areas should be prominently labeled as private property. '06

122 **Maryland Agland Preservation Foundation**

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

- 127 (1) The "Right to Farm" provisions provided in the sale of Maryland agricultural land easements
128 should be extended to anyone who is enrolled in an agricultural district. '07
- 129 (2) We direct MALPF to allow other forms of income when it does not interfere with the present
130 agriculture operation or change the agricultural capabilities of the land including expanded
131 permitted uses such as ag tourism and value added operations. '11
- 132 (3) We support the right of value-added agricultural businesses on MALPF land to sell products
133 not produced or grown on the farm as a secondary attraction (.e.g. sandwiches, t-shirts, small
134 gifts). '07
- 135 (4) We support the voluntary sale of water recharge easements on MALPF land in the Piedmont
136 region providing it does not interfere with any current or future potential agricultural
137 production. '05
- 138 (5) We recommend a revision of the agricultural value formula that is being used by the
139 Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation because the current formula discriminates
140 against farms in the program with superior soils. '05
- 141 (6) We recommend that farms be allowed into the MALPF program without regard to mineral
142 rights issues. '09
- 143 (7) We support the proposal to alter children's lots to allow the right to pass residual lots to a
144 new owner. '11
- 145 (8) We strongly urge MALPF to permit the onsite extraction of gas from farmland under
146 MALPF easement. '08

147 **Other Methods to Preserve Agland**

148 As another step toward preservation of agricultural land, we propose legislation to create
149 an Agricultural Land Condemnation Board, chaired by the State's Secretary of Agriculture.

150 Before anyone can condemn any productive agricultural lands for any purpose, the involved
151 body must appeal to the board. The board must determine that there is no reasonable or prudent
152 alternative. '05

153 We support the establishment of a state level green payments program similar to the
154 federal Conservation Security Program. '06

155 **Soil Surveys**

156 We urge the Natural Resource Conservation Service to complete the updating of the
157 county soil surveys for Maryland to include numerical productivity indexes. '06

158 **Transfer Development Rights**

159 We oppose the conveyance of Transferable Development Rights across county lines.'06

160 **Zoning**

161 We recommend that every county review their agricultural zoning and its impact on the
162 equity of landowners. '06

163 We support the preservation of agricultural land and equity through the process of
164 donating, purchasing and transferring development rights. However, state mandated down-
165 zoning is totally unacceptable. We support local zoning authority only. '08

166

167

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

168 We strongly support funding for the recommendations outlined in the "2006 Statewide
169 Plan for Agricultural Policy and Resource Management." '07

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

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

175 Rules and regulations written by the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
176 should be revised to allow for on-farm food processing and food preparation. The revisions
177 should require reasonable sanitary food handling practices without the cost and complication of
178 those required for year-round food service businesses. Short-term food service permits should be
179 issued for longer than the current 14 days and should be available in place of a year-round
180 permit. '04

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

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

187

188 **AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION**

189 We urge MDE to consider all agricultural water withdrawal permits in use before
190 increasing water withdrawal permits or approving new water withdrawal permits for
191 municipalities or subdivisions when these lands coincide. '07

192 We urge MDA, MDE and DNR to work with the U.S. Geological Survey in updating computer
193 models for Maryland's underground aquifers. '07

194 We support the recommendations of the Agricultural Water Use task force regarding the
195 State's Water Appropriation Law. The task force proposal would eliminate agriculture's
196 exemption for a permit and provide priorities for agricultural usage with a simple reporting
197 system. '04

198 We oppose any fees for permits or any fees for agriculture water use in the state. '04

199 Under the State Water Application Law, MDE is the only agency that may restrict water
200 usage in Maryland. We believe MDE should continue to be the only authority in this area.
201 Local governments should not be allowed to regulate water usage. Agricultural water use should
202 continue to be exempt from usage control. '04

203 We urge the State of Maryland to reinforce agriculture's right to use water for irrigation.
204 '04

205 We encourage MDE to streamline the agricultural water withdrawal permit process to
206 provide more timely approval. '08

207

208

AIR QUALITY

209 Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of
210 air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when
211 considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. '05

212 We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean air
213 (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in reducing
214 equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. '05

215 We support a healthy environment, including good air quality, but we are opposed to
216 emission control rules and standards for farm equipment that would require the retrofiting of our
217 equipment to meet those standards. '05

218 We urge repeal of the Emission Control Act of Maryland. In the event the program is not
219 repealed, the dynamometer testing should be voluntary. We support a review of the program to
220 evaluate cost and determine its effectiveness. '05

221 We oppose exhaust emissions from farm machinery along with dust and particulate
222 matter generated from agricultural activity being subject to the federal Clean Air standards
223 instituted in 1997. '05

224 We oppose regulations dealing with exhaust of ammonia or methane gases from
225 agricultural activities. '09

226 We recommend MDE allow the burning of agricultural use buildings. Buildings to be
227 burned should meet safety standards for burning set by county codes. Burning should be
228 supervised by the local fire company. '11

229

230

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

231 We recommend legislation be enacted that would require the assignment and prominent
232 display of an identifying number on all ATV's, dirt bikes, etc.'06

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

235 Landowners should not be held responsible for injury to riders or damage to ATV's when
236 operated on private lands. '03

237 We recognize the use of all-terrain vehicles as necessary agricultural vehicles in the day-
238 to-day business of agricultural operations. We support a farmer's ability to cross state and
239 county roads to get from one part of his/her farm to another. '04

240

241

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS

242 We support research into cost-effective alternative uses for agricultural commodities
243 including value-added products that would increase demand, and thus, improve marketing
244 potential. '08

245 We support continuing research and development of alternate and renewable energy
246 resources.'07

247 We strongly urge the local, state and federal government agencies to support new
248 alternative ag enterprises to provide assistance in market development; and, to provide education
249 so that new enterprises can become viable sources of income in agriculture.’07

250 **Corn Starch**

251 We encourage a ban on the various non-degradable plastic products. Due to a lack of
252 landfill space and other environmental problems, the sale of biodegradable plastic products
253 should be phased into law over the next several years. County, state and national laws should
254 prohibit the use of non-degradable six-pack rings, the sale of non-degradable grocery bags and
255 trash bags, and the sale of non-degradable disposable diapers. Biodegradable plastics should be
256 manufactured by the plastics industry, using cornstarch in its manufacturing process. The use of
257 biodegradable products will have very positive implications on the environment and use of a
258 renewable resource.’05

259

260 **ANIMAL CARE**

261 We oppose any legislation that would interfere with the right of farmers to raise livestock
262 and poultry in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices. ‘06

263 We encourage farmers to be proactive by using voluntary quality and environmental
264 assurance programs. ‘06

265 We support properly researched and industry-tested poultry and livestock practices that
266 provide consumers with a wholesome food supply and enable farmers to improve the care and
267 management of their animals. ‘06

268 We oppose any legislation or regulation that would prohibit or unduly restrict the use of
269 animals in agricultural or medical research. ‘06

270 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in
271 educating the food industry, school children, the general public and those elected to represent us
272 in government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,
273 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated
274 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.
275 ’09

276 We support the right of farmers to protect their livestock and poultry from predatory
277 animals. ‘06

278 We support the establishment of a Livestock Care Standards Board at MDA to review
279 and publish existing industry standards for livestock care and make recommendations to the
280 Secretary of Agriculture as needed. ‘10

281 We recommend that a farm operation suspected of animal cruelty be inspected by a
282 University animal science specialist or licensed veterinarian to determine whether a cruelty
283 situation exists before charges are filed or animals removed from the site. ‘06

284 We oppose animal rights activism that disrupts farming operations, fairs, or research
285 facilities. ’06

286 **Antibiotic Feed Additives**

287 Antibiotic feed additives found safe and effective by the Food and Drug Administration
288 should not be restricted. ’07

289 We support continued research to provide a definitive answer to the question of the use of
290 antibiotics in agribusiness and to the health of the public. ’09

291

292 **ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES**

293 We recommend the Maryland Department of Agriculture update, remodel and maintain
294 regional animal health laboratories. ’08

295 We urge Maryland Department of Agriculture to fund and fill the un-staffed positions
296 without delay.’10

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

301
302

AQUACULTURE

303 Aquaculture is a branch of agriculture and all applicable regulations shall be a function of
304 MDA. DNR, as a regulatory agency, shall be removed from control of all aquaculture products
305 and production regardless of location. All current DNR laws and regulations affecting
306 aquaculture shall be referred to MDA for modification and implementation as agricultural laws
307 and regulations. Restrictions and policies implemented by DNR relating to the management of
308 wild aquatic resources shall not infringe in any manner on aquaculture activities. '07

309
310

AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD

311 We recommend legislation be developed to prohibit clam rigs and other equipment
312 (which disturb or have the potential to destroy submerged aquatic vegetation, and which is used
313 for the capture of wild aquatic life) from operating within 300 feet of the shoreline and the same
314 distance from SAV in other areas. '05

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

319 The movement of oyster spat and adult oysters by the Department of Natural Resources
320 from one area in the Chesapeake Bay to another area shall not be done until such time as a site
321 specific testing of the animals to be moved has been completed by an independent laboratory
322 within 30 days prior to the proposed movement. In the event a determination is made that oyster
323 spat and oysters are not disease-free, they shall not be moved as such movement of the animals
324 creates stress, and survivability of spat moved is poor. '07

325 We support the research and development on the Asian Oyster and request that efforts to
326 introduce it into the Bay be put on a fast-track. '07

327
328

BEEKEEPING

329 MDA should give regulatory approval to effective miticide products used to protect
330 beehives. '07

331 Managed bee populations have been dwindling as the result of mite infestations, weather
332 conditions and other unknown factors. Funding should be provided and enhanced for additional
333 research and staffing to assist beekeepers and others in overcoming these challenges, to ensure
334 adequate managed bee populations in the future. '11

335 There should be no laws or regulations that prevent or discourage the keeping of
336 honeybees and other pollinators in an area unless it is determined that the beekeeper is not using
337 best management practices. '08

338 We support the adoption of a Standard of Identity for Honey by the State of Maryland.
339 Products labeled as honey are being sold in Maryland that are not the natural product of nectar
340 gathered by honeybees, or that are blends of honey and other substances. This false labeling,
341 now perfectly legal, harms honey producers and consumers. '11

342
343

BROWNFIELDS

344 We support incentives and liability protections to encourage new enterprises to utilize
345 former industrial sites as a means of reducing sprawl. '07

346 We support incentives to encourage the redevelopment of former residential and
347 commercial properties as a means of reducing sprawl. '03

348

349

CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

350 We oppose regulations that put farmers who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed at a
351 competitive disadvantage. We fully support federal programs such as the Conservation
352 Stewardship Program at USDA that reward and encourage farmers to install conservation
353 practices. '09

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

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

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

364 We urge continued and increased funding for research and implementation of BMPs on
365 farms, including nutrient management plans and the construction of ponds, waterways and buffer
366 strips to reduce run-off and ground water contamination. '07

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

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

372 We recommend that greater attention and research be given to what is happening in the
373 water column of the Bay itself. The filter feeders and small aquatic life will have to be a part of
374 the long term solution for the Bay cleanup. Harvesting moratoriums, restrictions on harvesting
375 methods, Asian oyster introduction with proper safeguards and other measures should be
376 considered. '07

377 State funding should be dramatically increased for revival of oysters, targeting surface
378 raised oysters and other filter feeders. '05

Dedicated Funds for Bay Clean-Up

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

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

385 We oppose the creation of local stormwater utility fees / impervious surface fees.'11

386 Farms and farmsteads should be exempt from any impervious surface fees. '11

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

TMDL & Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)

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

396 impact study being done. Government should direct actions that are the best that can be achieved
397 within reasonable limits to reduce impacts to the Bay.’11

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

401 The EPA’s Chesapeake Bay WIP requires the targeted nutrient reduction (TMDL) goals
402 be met by 2025. Maryland has proposed a more ambitious plan that sets 2020 as the end date.
403 We strongly urge Maryland to reset the deadline at 2025. ’11

404

405 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

406 **Farmers’ Markets**

407 We strongly encourage the continuance of all farmers markets. ’07

408 **Farm to School Program**

409 We support the Farm-to-School program offered by the State. We encourage all school
410 systems to participate in and actively promote this program and purchase more locally grown
411 products for school nutrition programs. ’10

412 **Grain Dealers**

413 We recommend that all grain dealers in the state of Maryland should have certified grain-
414 testing personnel. We request that samples taken for moisture tests be free and clear of foreign
415 materials. We support the voluntary establishment of standards for moisture discounts, which
416 separate shrinkage, and the drying cost and which are not tied to the price paid for the grain. ’05

417 **Labeling Requirements**

418 Since the risk of illness from unpasteurized cider is no greater than the risk of illness
419 from any other food source, we do not support any labeling of cider beyond whether or not it is
420 pasteurized. ’07

421 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

422 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise. We
423 urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's efforts to
424 improve marketing services. We support the “Maryland’s Best” marketing program.’09

425 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that
426 serve all citizens.’07

427 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Economic Development to continue
428 its policy of providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural industries.’06

429 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of
430 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities. ’05

431 **Deep Water Terminal**

432 We support a viable grain export terminal.’07

433 The State of Maryland must work diligently to develop a competitive grain trade deep
434 water terminal, which is critical for the survival of grain producers. ’07

435 We urge the creation of more storage capacity for fuels in the Baltimore area. ’05

436 **Roadside Markets**

437 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural
438 products.’06

439 We encourage the enforcement of existing county zoning laws related to farmers markets
440 and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer merchants and/or
441 non-local merchants. ’10

442 **Roadside Signs**

443 Due to the need for the farmers to diversify their operations the use of roadside signs is
444 imperative to let the public know your location and which products are available. Therefore, we
445 support exempting such signs from the regulations governing roadside signs. ’06

446 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

447 We oppose any segment of the farm community promoting their production methods as
448 healthier or better for the environment without evidence to support those claims.'11

449 **Value Added**

450 We support the development of a statewide value-added processing system. '09

451

452

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

453 **Best Management Practices**

454 The process of obtaining a permit from the appropriate government agencies to do any
455 type of work in or along the small streams that flow through our farmland has become extremely
456 burdensome and time consuming. We urge these government agencies to approve general
457 permits to install approved best management practices. '06

458 We encourage agricultural landowners and tenant operators to study, develop and
459 implement long-term programs or lease arrangements with conservation practice systems,
460 including voluntary nutrient management plans that will achieve the desired water quality
461 benefits.'07

462 We support the development of a reporting system to capture farmer installed and funded
463 Best Management Practices that meet the established standards, to demonstrate agricultural
464 progress towards meeting Chesapeake Bay water quality improvement goals and for
465 incorporation into the Chesapeake model. We support the development of standards for farmer
466 installed Best Management Practices that may not meet NRCS standards and specifications, or
467 are ineligible for cost-share payments, but that provide water quality and erosion control
468 benefits; such practices would include stream fencing and narrow buffers. '09

469 Interpretation and definition of Best Management Practices (BMPs) must recognize the
470 economic impact and cost to the farmer. '07

471 If accepted best management practices are implemented in good faith and later
472 determined to have a negative impact on the environment or natural resources, the landowner
473 should not be held legally or financially responsible.'07

474 **Conservation Practices**

475 We support the reclassification of Class 3 trout streams, which contain no native trout to
476 Class 4 streams. '06

477 We recommend the Maryland Department of Agricultural include a bunker-type structure
478 to be covered with a tarp for the storage of solid animal waste in the Maryland Agriculture Cost-
479 share (MACS) program. Any contract poultry grower in Maryland, regardless of capacity, should
480 be eligible for cost share funds for both manure sheds and composters.'07

481 We support landowner wildlife plantings, but encourage the restriction of tree and shrub
482 plantings within 25 feet of any right-of-way in order to reduce the cost of trimming at taxpayer
483 expense and to enhance public safety. '04

484 We urge the state to assure that adequate funds be available to provide sufficient cost
485 sharing of approved soil conservation practices. We also urge the state to provide an adequate
486 number of trained personnel in local Soil Conservation District to assist farmers and property
487 owners in the development and implementation of their conservation plans, making sure the
488 plans not only provide the needed environmental protection but are practical and economical as
489 well. '06

490 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

491 We strongly recommend that public agencies should not be eligible for funding under the
492 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). '07

493 We believe that programs that offer incentives for conservation, wildlife habitat creation and
494 preservation should minimize the loss of prime farmland while maintaining our natural
495 resources. '03

496 We propose changes to the CREP that are intended to keep prime land available for
497 production, reduce the economic incentive to take whole farms or major portions thereof out of
498 production, to remove the government as a primary cash rent competitor for valuable agricultural
499 land and to provide for more effective maintenance of land under CREP contract. '07

500 Our proposed changes include the following:

- 501 (1) CREP contracts should be issued only on land that has a scientifically supported impact on
502 water quality. CREP should not be used to create wildlife habitat where water quality
503 benefit is negligible. '07
- 504 (2) Buffers should be variable, with a maximum width of 100 feet, based on topographical
505 and soil conditions to ensure water quality benefits and minimize loss of productive
506 cropland.'07
- 507 (3) Buffers established adjacent to ditches should have a maximum width of 50 feet and
508 should be smaller if prime and productive soils are impacted. Buffers should not include
509 trees within 35 feet of a ditch in order to facilitate maintenance of the ditch. The practice
510 of digging ditches just to enroll the entire acreage on farms should be prohibited. '03
- 511 (4) Regulations should be developed to require weed control on all land subject to a CREP
512 contract. The maintenance and control rules should be enforced. '07
- 513 (5) Mowing of CREP lands should be required annually if weeds cannot be controlled by
514 other means. Weeds of primary concern to adjacent farmers include, but are not limited
515 to: giant ragweed, multiflora rose, burr cucumber, phragmites, autumn olive, mile-a-
516 minute, and kudzu, scrub trees and noxious grasses. '04
- 517 (6) Rental rates for future CREP contracts should be adjusted to provide for a sliding-scale
518 that pays more for land immediately adjacent to water and less for land closer to prime
519 and productive soils. Rates should be in line with local rental rates. '10

520 USDA landlord/tenant rules should be strictly enforced to prevent losses to farmers who
521 have already invested resources into land being considered for a CREP contract. '02

522 Upon re-enrollment of land under a CREP contract, a farm should not be required to
523 destroy existing vegetation and replant as long as the existing CREP land has been properly
524 maintained and will meet the water quality and erosion control goals of the program. '09

525 **Stormwater Management**

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

528
529

COVER CROP PROGRAM

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

- 532 (1) It should be made permanent. '07
- 533 (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs.'10
- 534 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '07
- 535 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is
536 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
- 537 (5) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain
538 crops and hay acreage. '07
- 539 (6) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
- 540 (7) It should allow variable planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '07
- 541 (8) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast seeding.
542 '07
- 543 (9) Aerial seeding should be funded at the same rate as all other methods of seeding. '07
- 544 (10) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it
545 on the farm. '08

- 546 (11) The annual signup date for the program should be the first two weeks of August. '09
547 (12) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested
548 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09

549
550 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program.
551 '10

552

553 CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

554 We recommend that the membership of the Critical Areas Commission be comprised of
555 at least 50% farmers who own property within 1,000 feet of the critical area.'07

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

558 We are opposed to the inclusion of upstream tributaries and non-tidal water into the
559 Critical Areas Program.'07

560 We support legislation that would require the state to compensate, at the fair market
561 value, Maryland property owners who are monetarily affected by the Critical Area Legislation
562 and/or the Endangered Species Act. '08

563 The inability to harvest timber in the critical areas is creating an inequitable financial loss
564 for the landowner. We recommend that the landowner be compensated for this loss.'07

565 We are concerned about exemptions granted within the Critical Area for marinas and
566 other recreational water related activities. '08

567

568 CROP PROTECTION

569 Chemicals

570 We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them by
571 approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '08

572 In order to help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to
573 maintain a biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old
574 chemicals, chemical containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '07

575 We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned
576 chemicals.'06

577 Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water contaminated
578 by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to label
579 instructions. '06

580 Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not
581 on emotional issues. '08

582 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The
583 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an
584 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to
585 farm his property. '07

586 We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to
587 aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '08

588 We support legislation that provides for the pesticide laws to be regulated only by the
589 State or Federal government. '08

590 Disease Prevention & Pest Control

591 We support the monitoring of plant diseases such as Asian Soybean Rust in the exotic
592 plants used by homeowners and landscapers that may include invasive weed species that serve as
593 alternate hosts. We urge MDA to study these plant species and bolster its efforts to assure that all
594 new plants have no negative impact on farm crops or nursery stock.'07

595 We support existing restrictions on the movement of Ash trees to prevent the spread of
596 the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. '07

597 We support funding for joint research by universities to study and eliminate the Brown
598 Marmorated Stink Bug. '10

599 **Environmental Surcharge**

600 We are opposed to any state tax or surcharge on fertilizers and crop protectants to fund
601 environmental programs.'06

602

603 **DAIRY INDUSTRY**

604 We strongly support the combined efforts of Maryland Farm Bureau with the MD Dairy
605 Industry Association and the Dairy Industry Advisory Council to develop a program that will
606 enhance the transparency of the pricing of milk to producers, raise milk prices, and increase the
607 stability and viability of the dairy industry in Maryland. '10

608 We urge the state to fund the Maryland Dairy Farmer Emergency Trust fund with a
609 minimum of \$5 million per year. '09

610 We support the Maryland Dairy Industry Association and urge farmers to join. '09

611 **Milk Marketing**

612 Maintaining consumer confidence in dairy products is critical to the viability of the dairy
613 industry. Dairy product labeling should be truthful, accurate and be able to be substantiated.'07

614 All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as "raw milk" only. '09

615 We believe schools should not sell milk to students after the sell-by date. '07

616 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

617 We oppose new or increased fees for dairy farmers, haulers and cooperatives. '04

618 We support current Maryland Law for the prohibition of raw milk sales. We support
619 legislation that would prohibit the use of cattle-share or farm-share agreements as a means to
620 circumvent existing raw milk sales laws. '09

621 Maryland should allow farmers to produce and process raw milk cheese on their farms
622 and sell it from the farm after the federally required 60 day aging period. '06

623

624 **DREDGE SPOIL**

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

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

629 We oppose dumping of dredge spoils into open water and on farmland. '05

630

631 **EFFLUENT TRADING**

632 We oppose any form of government mandated and controlled effluent trading for the
633 compliance for nutrient reductions from point sources of nutrient loading in lieu of Biological
634 Nutrient Reduction (BNR) upgrading or delaying of any sewage treatment facility upgrades. '10

635 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient reduction that allow farmers to receive
636 fair compensation for nutrient removal and/or reductions. '10

637

638 **ENDANGERED SPECIES**

639 We support a voluntary conservation habitat reserve program that would provide
640 incentives for landowners to establish and maintain habitat for endangered species.'05

641 Compensation shall be provided for landowners where use of the land is restricted by the
642 Endangered Species Act.'07

643 We urge the state to eliminate from the list those species (threatened or endangered) that
644 might have limited numbers in Maryland but are common elsewhere.'06

645 Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal
646 law. '07
647 Any plant or animal that is taken as a result of an agricultural practice shall be considered
648 an incidental taking. '07
649

ENERGY POLICY

651 We strongly support a comprehensive, long-term energy policy that fully utilizes
652 domestic energy resources and aggressively promotes the role of agriculture. '03

653 We support an increase in off-shore and land based drilling for oil and natural gas to
654 enhance supplies, lower prices and reduce dependence on foreign sources. '05

Ethanol & Bio-Diesel Fuel

656 We support an energy independence and efficiency policy to include: (1) site approval,
657 environmental issues, funding and approval of renewable energy sources; (2) the use of
658 renewable fuels in county, state and federal automobile fleets; (3) support for the construction of
659 ethanol and biofuels plants in Maryland; and (4) support for production and use incentives for
660 ethanol and biodiesel. '07

661 We urge the use of some ethanol in gasoline and soy diesel in diesel fuel. '05

662 We urge research and education on the use of ethanol in all engines at 10 percent and
663 higher blends to ensure we meet the Renewable Fuel Standard goal of 36 billion gallons of
664 renewable fuel use by 2025. '09

665 We urge new research to improve ethanol compatibility with farm equipment. '10

666 We urge that all state and county government vehicles (including school buses) be
667 required to use bio diesel or ethanol fuels. '05

668 We urge the required use of at least 5% bio-diesel by all state diesel powered vehicles.
669 '04

670 We encourage the maritime industries to use bio-diesel fuel on the Chesapeake Bay and
671 in other Maryland waterways. '07

672 We strongly believe that public officials need to seriously consider the opportunities and
673 potential for increasing local or domestic demand of commodities through the production of
674 Ethanol E-85. '07

675 We recommend that the Maryland Department of Transportation make changes to
676 guidelines so that current E85 (85% blend gasoline/ethanol) models may be used in fleets to
677 meet alternative fuel mandates. '07

678 We urge the support of government agencies such as the Department of Business &
679 Economic Development (DBED) in the development of bio-fuels in Maryland. '02

Other Alternative Energy Sources

681 We encourage research, development and utilization of alternative energy sources from
682 methane, biomass, wind, nuclear, solar, hydrogen, hydro and clean natural gas. '08

683 Additionally, we urge that this process be aided by appropriate government tax
684 incentives. '07

685 We support the use of on-farm wind and solar energy production to provide electric
686 energy for the farm and to be sold to the energy grid. We encourage state and county
687 governments to provide regulatory support and encouragement for wind generators and turbines
688 to help offset farm energy costs.'10

Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces

690 Outdoor wood fired boilers/furnaces that utilize approved emission control systems and
691 EPA best burn practices for Hydronic heaters should be allowed. '08
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ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING

We recommend no changes be made to Maryland's "Standing Law," which negatively affects the state's economy and the private property rights of individuals. '07

We support the reversal of any laws to increase standing to special interest groups. '10

EQUINE INDUSTRY

We support the inclusion of inventories of the various classes of equine in the state in future MDA and NASS agriculture statistical surveys. '07

We support the recognition of equine as part of the agricultural industry and not as companion animals. Riding lessons, boarding or training given on a farm should be considered a part of the normal agriculture practices. We support measures to improve the Maryland Bred Program within the Thoroughbred and Standardbred Industry. '05

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

We support the creation of state debt to fund the Maryland Horse Park. '05

We support the establishment of a permanent, federally operated import/export quarantine facility for livestock in the state of Maryland. We urge the USDA and MDA to work toward its establishment. '05

FAMILY VALUES

We recommend that the Maryland legislature and the Governor should: (1) Pass legislation to make parents more accountable for the destructive action of their children; and (2) Have the party involved more monetarily liable for the destructive action they cause. If they are financially unable to pay, they should do so through community service. The monetary amount should be determined and paid in full.'05

FARM SERVICE AGENCY - COUNTY COMMITTEES

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

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

We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and consolidation of offices and services. '06

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

Maryland Farm Bureau is concerned about the purchase of farmland by investors who are foreign nationals. We believe land purchases by foreign investors should be closely monitored. We insist that foreign investors be required to conform to all United States Tax laws and to import and export regulations applicable to American producers. '05

FOREST CONSERVATION

The Forest Conservation Act of 1991 has far reaching language, including reforestation lands cleared for development and afforesting, which means planting trees where no trees have existed for many years. We urge amending the Forest Conservation act to remove the afforestation section completely. We urge state government to recognize the difference between rural low-density development and urban high-density development in relation to tree conservation. The percentage of reforestation needs to be based on actual forest that is destroyed, rather than the present threshold percentage of parcels.'06

743 We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with regards
744 to the harvesting of trees. '06
745 Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural
746 lands under the state of Maryland's conservation or land use programs. '08
747

GAMBLING

749 We support that a portion of gaming proceeds continue to be utilized to supplement the
750 purse and bred fund accounts. We support licensed video gaming and gambling at racetracks
751 and/or other facilities and that a minimum of 25% of the total net revenue from these sources be
752 used to supplement the purse and Maryland Bred Fund accounts to equal the average dollar value
753 of the three highest states in the Purse and Breeding bonus accounts. Any expansion into other
754 forms of gambling such as table games and sports book should benefit the equine industry
755 similar to Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs). '09
756

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

758 We support the production and use of GMO products. We encourage the education of
759 government officials and the public on the product safety, economic benefits and environmental
760 benefits of GMOs. '07
761

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS - STATE GOVERNMENT

Elected Officials

764 We recommend that any proposed pay increases for policy making elected officials shall
765 be placed on the general elections ballot in an electoral year in which a candidate for Governor is
766 on the ballot and shall not become effective until ratified by the electorate. In addition, no
767 retirement benefits shall accrue to any policy making elected official as a result of service in that
768 position. '05

769 We support a constitutional change to elect one senator per county. '07

770 We support a House of Delegates apportioned on population with a minimum of one
771 delegate per county. '07

772 We oppose any method of selection for Clerks of the Court, Register of Wills, and Judges
773 of the Orphans Court, other than election by the people. '07

774 We urge local control in the selections of those responsible for operating our local court
775 systems. '07

Ethics

777 We support a change in current State law to allow farmers to become eligible for
778 employment by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '06

Government Spending

780 We urge the reduction of government agency bureaucracy and duplication in an effort to
781 reduce costs, fees and frustration of the general public. '04

782 We urge all levels of government to operate within a balanced budget. '07

Maryland Agricultural Commission

784 We support the efforts by the Maryland Agricultural Commission to implement the
785 Strategic Plan for Agriculture. '08

Maryland Department of Agriculture

787 We strongly oppose consolidation or transfer of any of MDA's current programs,
788 functions or authorities to any other department. We strongly support the transfer of any and all
789 ag-related programs, functions and authorities from other departments to MDA. '09

790 We urge the MDA to establish official standardized office hours for all department
791 offices including field offices. '09

792 **Regulatory Reform**

793 We urge consideration be given to the economic impact upon farmers and landowners as
794 local, state, and federal legislators and agencies develop laws, regulations and policies. '06

795 We request that the farm community continue to be consulted and be allowed to
796 participate in the formulation of regulations and laws at all levels of government particularly
797 when they impact the Ag community. '05

798 Agencies developing regulations should have a thorough knowledge of all related aspects
799 of agriculture, not just their immediate subject matter, or they should seek additional input from
800 agriculture in the development of regulations. '05

801 We urge all government agencies develop regulations in cooperation with other agencies
802 so that there is a reduction in duplication and a consistency of purpose. '05

803 We ask for removal of the question on Maryland's death certificate in bold print, "Did
804 tobacco use contribute to the cause of death, YES { } NO { } UNCERTAIN { }?" '06

805 Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said
806 regulations. '05

807 We recommend that all State agencies review their rules and regulations that affect the
808 agriculture industry and modify and/or eliminate those that are outdated or serve no purpose. '05

809 Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and
810 scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry
811 industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All
812 regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis. '07

813 The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review (AELR)
814 Committee should have the authority to prevent a proposed regulation from being implemented.
815 The Committee should be able to refer controversial proposals to the full General Assembly for a
816 vote or for amendment before an agency can implement the proposed regulation. '08

817 Since innovative ideas and non-traditional thinking have been the underpinnings of
818 agricultural advancement, we urge the various agencies to allow for this in the writing and
819 enforcement of policies and regulations, provided basic health and safety concerns are met. '04

820 **State and Local Agencies**

821 We support the co-location of ag agencies, ag education and resources in regional ag
822 centers when feasible. '07

823 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '08

824 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
825 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the Maryland
826 National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict the
827 access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on private
828 property to no greater than is allowed to law enforcement agencies. '07

829 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
830 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
831 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate
832 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
833 practices. '08

834 **State Owned Farmland**

835 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
836 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
837 converted to conservation uses. '08

838 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

839 In light of the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension program
840 to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the present state
841 pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '11

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GREENWAYS - RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT

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

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

GYPSY MOTH CONTROL

Maryland Farm Bureau is concerned about the damage caused by the gypsy moth. Therefore, we support the appropriation of sufficient funds to spray all areas in the state where the gypsy moth population has reached the critical stage. We recommend that the program be returned to the 250 egg masses per acre baseline. ‘05

INDUSTRIAL HEMP

We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow industrial hemp as an agricultural crop.’07

INSURANCE

Crop Insurance

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

We oppose the late planting penalty due to wet soils. ’03

Health Insurance & Medical Costs

We recommend that state and federal governments consider appropriate measures to control skyrocketing medical costs. Every effort should be made to limit medical expense increases to the cost of living. Furthermore, we believe that health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-employed individuals.’06

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

We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of quality health care. ’04

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

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

890 **Insurance Rates**

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

894 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry as a result
895 of claims that are considered "Act of God" incidents. '03

896 We urge the General Assembly to conduct a legislative review of all insurance costs in
897 Maryland. '02

898 **Liability Insurance**

899 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '06

900 Maryland should pass a law limiting liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers
901 to afford the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '06

902

903

JOHNE'S DISEASE

904 It is imperative that a Johne's testing protocol be immediately developed for Maryland
905 and that total funding be provided. The protocol should be designed after those of the
906 surrounding states. The protocol should be farmer-friendly, designed and directed toward use as
907 an on-farm management tool. '03

908 A fully funded indemnity program should also be established in Maryland. '02

909 We acknowledge that the Maryland Department of Agriculture has made progress with
910 the Johne's program and request continued support for it. '05

911

912

LABOR STANDARDS

913 We oppose efforts to change Maryland law to require the payment of overtime wages to
914 farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. '04

915

916

LAND STEWARDSHIP

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

919

920

LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING

921 **Annexation**

922 Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations
923 within the county. '05

924 **Growth Management**

925 We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations
926 within our state. '11

927 We oppose the premise of PlanMaryland and urge the state to slow down the process for
928 considering it to give counties and citizens time to thoroughly review the plan. Any benchmarks
929 and/or consequences established must be clearly defined and the final plan should be subject to
930 approval by the General Assembly prior to implementation. '11

931 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.
932 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural
933 counties. '08

934 We believe no program (or parts of a program) should be adopted until we review and
935 evaluate the accumulative impact of all of our present programs. We need to know the inter-
936 relationship of all the legislation and regulations dealing with growth management such as the
937 Chesapeake Bay critical area law; the Nontidal Wetland Protection Act; federal, state, and local
938 resource protection programs; the agricultural land preservation program; Program Open Space;
939 and the reforestation law passed by the General Assembly. '05

940 We support a requirement for local governments to consider the impact of new
941 development on water resources and current users. Development should not be allowed to
942 surpass the level of water resources. '07

943 Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's
944 property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '06

945 We support public and private programs that improve the livability of urban areas and
946 attract residents to those urban areas. '02

947 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).
948 '10

949 **Permitting**

950 We support the continued exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building
951 permits and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the zoning code. We further support
952 the inclusion of specific language in the building code to permit public access to existing,
953 structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated upgrades to the full current codes.
954 '05

955 **Reverse Set-backs & Buffers**

956 We urge county planners to require protective measures for farmland, such as reverse
957 setbacks, buffers, fencing, etc. for new non-agricultural uses occurring adjacent to existing
958 agricultural operations. '06

959 **Zoning**

960 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their efforts
961 to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners involved
962 should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria changes.
963 Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall provide for just
964 compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no down zoning on agriculture land.
965 '07

966 Zoning regulations should be determined at the local, not state level. '08

967 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '08

968 Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or
969 default. '08

970

971

LAW ENFORCEMENT

972 **Penalties & Confinement**

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

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

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

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

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

990 **Judicial Process**

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

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

996 **Investigation of Crimes**

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

999 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who
1000 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.'06

1001 To deter copper thefts, we propose a mandatory waiting period between the sale and the
1002 payment for certain salvaged material. '11

1003

1004 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

1005 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law
1006 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

1007

1008 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

1009 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public
1010 monies.'06

1011

1012 **LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY**

1013 Government officials and inspectors must be required to follow stringent biosecurity
1014 practices and respect private property rights at all times when visiting farms. '08

1015 We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. '07

1016 We support changing the classification of Reindeer and Bison to livestock and placing
1017 them under the regulatory jurisdiction of the MD Department of Agriculture. '03

1018

1019 **LOCAL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

1020 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08

1021

1022 **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

1023 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the
1024 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as necessary,
1025 including the purchase of needed equipment.'07

1026

1027 **NONTIDAL WETLANDS**

1028 We oppose the present definition of Nontidal wetlands as set forth in the 1989 "Federal
1029 Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands." This definition would designate many acres of
1030 marginal wetlands that possess minimal wetlands values. It would also include many acres of
1031 cropland that has been farmed historically. '05

1032 We support the revision of the "Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands"
1033 to exclude:

1034 (1) cropland that was farmed prior to the enactment of any laws dealing with the
1035 regulation;

1036 (2) areas with woody or natural vegetation that are not ponded for more than fifteen
1037 consecutive days during some part of the growing season. '05

1038 This definition should also be used for any existing or proposed state legislation. It is
1039 imperative that the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the

1040 Natural Resource Conservation Service review the definition of Nontidal wetlands and evaluate
1041 its implications on agriculture. Furthermore, it is our belief that all three of the criteria should
1042 exist before land is considered a wetland and we hope the manual will be amended accordingly.
1043 '05

1044 We support the designation of the Natural Resource Conservation Service as the lead
1045 agency for the development of uniform wetlands delineation.'06

1046 Agriculture needs to be exempt from mitigation for agricultural activities where the
1047 farmer has, and is carrying on good agricultural practices. '07

1048 We recommend that when wetlands are identified, property owners must be notified and
1049 an appeal or review process be developed.'07

1050 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should be
1051 deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly compensated." '08

1052 Maryland regulations should not be more stringent than the federal regulations regarding
1053 non-tidal wetlands in agricultural land. '08

1054 We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that
1055 they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of
1056 public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost
1057 of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. '08

1058 We urge local control of regulations and permits limiting the use of wetlands.'07

1059

1060

NOXIOUS WEEDS

Noxious Weed List

1062 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, asiatic tearthumb,
1063 kudzu, multi-flora rose (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry), and mile-a-
1064 minute placed on the noxious weed list. '04

Compliance on Government-Owned Land

1066 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments abide by the noxious weed
1067 control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '02

Enforcement

1069 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the
1070 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,
1071 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's
1072 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '07

1073 We re commend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators
1074 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are
1075 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1076 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1077 non crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all of the control methods outlined by the
1078 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '05

1079 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1080 conservation programs so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1081 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '09

Public Education

1083 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1084 general public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of thistles, multi-
1085 flora rose, johnsongrass, poison hemlock, shatter cane and autumn olive.'07

Weed Control Methods

1087 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1088 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and

1089 eliminate these noxious weeds. Until these materials are developed, MDA should ban ornamental
1090 grasses such as eastern gamma grass from being introduced in Maryland. '05
1091 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious
1092 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will
1093 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination. '05
1094

1095 NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

1096 Nutrient Management for Farms

1097 We believe in a voluntary nutrient management program and that all farmers should
1098 apply nutrients in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound science.
1099 '07

1100 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of nutrient
1101 management plans. '09

1102 We support a Maryland Department of Agriculture nutrient management program that
1103 (1) produces real water quality improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3)
1104 requires reasonable recordkeeping, (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5)
1105 provides adequate flexibility for farmers to properly manage their operations, and (6) provides
1106 appropriate inspection and enforcement. '08

1107 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.
1108 '10

1109 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient
1110 management program to achieve the following:

- 1111 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- 1112 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.
1113 '05
- 1114 c. Allow the use of nutrient standards for manure established by the University of Maryland
1115 if so desired. '05
- 1116 d. Prevent yield capping.
- 1117 e. Allow the use of scientifically valid nutrient recommendations from the University of
1118 Maryland or other public and private sources. '07
- 1119 f. The elimination of the Nutrient Management Voucher requirements and the transfer of
1120 the resultant savings to Extension for nutrient management plan writing. '10

1121
1122 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a
1123 farm based on a complaint. '09

1124 We support the continuation of the farmer-filed annual certification of plan compliance
1125 along with an annual summary of nutrient application rather than requiring the filing of the
1126 completed plan. '06

1127 MDA should develop an optional on-line reporting system for the annual summaries. '09

1128 Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality

1129 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain
1130 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately-written nutrient
1131 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government
1132 entity. '10

1133 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date they should be
1134 properly destroyed. '08

1135 Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education

1136 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1137 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '03

1138 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**

1139 We seek reinstatement of full funding for Nutrient Management Cost-Share for the
1140 development and updating of nutrient management plans by private industry and by University
1141 of Maryland Extension. All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies.'11

1142 The nutrient management plan writing positions that were recently eliminated by the
1143 University of Maryland Extension due to state budget cuts should be replaced when funds
1144 become available. '09

1145 Assets and personnel should be redeployed through the University of Maryland
1146 Extension to provide: (1) Adequate nutrient management planning staff in each county to
1147 service all farmers who request assistance; (2) Permanent Extension positions with competitive
1148 salaries and benefits for nutrient management planners; (3) training for all farmers who desire to
1149 write their own nutrient management plans. '06

1150 We urge full funding of \$1.8 million per year to the University of Maryland Extension to
1151 provide nutrient management plan writing services to all farmers requesting assistance. '10

1152 We request that funding for nutrient management education and plan development go
1153 directly to University of Maryland Extension in order to hire and maintain adequate permanent
1154 nutrient management advisors in each county. '10

1155 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1156 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1157 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1158 We strongly oppose additional requirements, such as the Maryland Animal Feeding
1159 Operation (MAFO) and the revised Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by
1160 MDE. '08

1161 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1162 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1163 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '11

1164 **Manure and Litter Management**

1165 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for crop
1166 production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '04

1167 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.
1168 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies - beyond those previously conducted by
1169 UMD researchers - that include different soil types, locations and manure types before any ban
1170 on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1171 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1172 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1173 **Soil Testing**

1174 We recommend that a public soil testing lab at the MD Department of Agriculture be
1175 opened and available to Maryland farmers/landowners. '08

1176 We believe MDA should work with the University of Maryland and the soil testing labs
1177 used by area farmers to develop a soil test report and recommendations that can be directly
1178 included in a certified plan. '03

1179 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1180 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '10

1181

1182

POULTRY LITTER

1183 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter. '10

1184 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a cost-
1185 share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the mandatory
1186 covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '07

1187 We oppose any effort to move ALL poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '08

1188 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy generation.
1189 '11
1190 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1191 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere in
1192 the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '08
1193 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research based guidelines for field
1194 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1195 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '08
1196

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

1197
1198 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1199 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner.'07

1200 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production of
1201 an agricultural commodity on farmland. '07

1202 Any government action that diminishes an owner's right to use his property constitutes a
1203 taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should provide due process and
1204 compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been diminished. The just basis for
1205 compensation must be at least fair market value. '08

1206 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and state
1207 levels.

1208 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the party
1209 disputing any property lines. '06

1210 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to notify
1211 all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified letter,
1212 in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '11

Eminent Domain

1214 We believe the recent Supreme Court "Kelo" decision violates the basic principles and
1215 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1216 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1217 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We
1218 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and
1219 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of
1220 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1221 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop. '06

1222 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1223 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1224 property.'10

1225 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.
1226 '06

1227 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for the
1228 purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original landowner
1229 or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other than for which
1230 it was originally acquired. '05
1231

PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS

1233 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1234 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of parkland being purchased in this
1235 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1236 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1237 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to use

1238 part or all of their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1239 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1240 '05

1241 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1242 present parkland rather than the acquisition of new land.'06

1243

1244 **PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS**

1245 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1246 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding.'07

1247 Also we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property owners
1248 of the easement rights of the PDA.'06

1249

1250 **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

1251 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1252 present to the general public of the state. We urge the State and County Health Departments to
1253 gather as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs and
1254 treatment of these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information.
1255 '06

1256 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1257 problem in order to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state.

1258 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1259 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

1260

1261 **PUBLIC OWNED LAND**

1262 Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in
1263 production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '06

1264 We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to
1265 acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to
1266 parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by
1267 willing sellers only. '07

1268 In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the
1269 governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges and wildlands to
1270 determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate the
1271 sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '09

1272 We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or
1273 other recreational uses in an effort to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and
1274 administering these lands.'09

1275 **Timberland Management**

1276 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use
1277 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting
1278 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '07

1279

1280 **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1281 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome and most affordable food in the
1282 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the
1283 media unless substantiated and accurate.

1284 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.
1285 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based
1286 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors and
1287 subsequent retailers.

1288 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and
1289 information regarding the local farm community.

1290 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the
1291 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland
1292 agriculture to the public through various media outlets.

1293 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that
1294 would:

- 1295 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1296 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1297 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the
1298 environment.
- 1299 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals and educational displays.
- 1300 5. Include a speakers bureau.'08

1301
1302 We encourage state, county and local government officials to take a more active role in
1303 supporting, promoting and defending agriculture. '09

1304 RAILROADS

1306 Where economically feasible, we urge the state government to take whatever action
1307 necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade them where necessary, including
1308 adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

1309 RECYCLING

1311 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury to
1312 animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that would
1313 require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we recommend that a
1314 sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for recycling. '05

1315 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we
1316 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics.'07

1317 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '04

1318 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials, as
1319 well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

1320 Due to the increased use of plastic wrap in agriculture, we urge the search for a suitable
1321 reclamation process. '04

1322 Tire Fund & Tire Recycling

1323 The state Tire Fund collection program for farmers should be expanded to include a
1324 program that would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state once every four
1325 years. This program should collect all used farm tires as long as the funds are available in the
1326 Tire Fund without raising fees. '07

1327 We request that the tire recycling fee levied on new tire purchases be used exclusively for
1328 research into tire recycling and to subsidize actual tire recycling projects.'04

1329 We support a farm tire amnesty program. '11

1330

1331 RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS

1332 When a utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be
1333 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.
1334 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be
1335 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary as a result of building waterways,
1336 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground where possible

1337 and that the areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars and weeds
1338 by the utility company.’06

1339 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights of way or property lines
1340 when feasible.’05

1341 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used
1342 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the underlying
1343 property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be returned to
1344 adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee simple, the
1345 property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first refusal upon
1346 abandonment. ’07

1347 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail use,
1348 and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will preserve
1349 the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. ’09

1350

1351 **RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS**

1352 We believe in and support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which
1353 protects the right of the people to keep and bear Arms. ’08

1354 We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by law-
1355 abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, longarm, autoloader or manual loader. Furthermore, we
1356 are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition.’07

1357

1358 **RIGHT-TO-FARM**

1359 We support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect the privilege
1360 and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce without undue or
1361 unreasonable restrictions, regulations or harassment from government or the private sector. We
1362 support actions to ensure that farmers are protected from undue liability and nuisance suits when
1363 carrying out normal production practices. ’05

1364 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland “Right-to-Farm” Law but believe that it should
1365 be strengthened. ’05

1366 We recommend that right-to-farm laws extend to the ag-supported industry, i.e.
1367 equipment dealers, grain and feed storage, processing, etc. We also urge that it be evaluated and
1368 amended if necessary to make sure that the use of scare guns (for crop protection) is allowed. ’11

1369 Before entering into the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the
1370 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review in an attempt to settle
1371 the nuisance complaint between the effected parties. The reconciliation board’s decision in
1372 nuisance complaints should be viewed as a judgment. ’09

1373 Failure to follow a county’s right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead
1374 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant’s legal fees. ’07

1375 **Funding to Protect Farms**

1376 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1377 environmental suits filed against farmers. ’11

1378

1379 **RIPARIAN BUFFERS**

1380 We favor voluntary incentive-based programs for establishing riparian buffers. Grass
1381 species or natural vegetation is preferred. When forest buffers are established provisions should
1382 be made for the future harvest of such trees without penalty. ’07

1383 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis.’07

1384 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1385 use. ’09

1386

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

Road Design

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

We recommend that the State Highway Administration and county roads departments consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture when designing islands or the placement of road signs and mailboxes so that they do not prohibit or make difficult the passage of farm machinery. (For example, signs or mailboxes should not be placed directly opposite each other on both sides of the road. Staggering signs and mailboxes on either side of a roadway provides more room for the passage of very large equipment.) We suggest that batteries of mailboxes be used where possible and placed off of 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 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. '05

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

We encourage the State Highway Administration to proceed with urgently needed road construction projects. '08

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

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

Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)

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

1436 We recommend that trees and limbs be cut back a minimum of five (5) feet from the road
1437 edge and to a height of 16 feet on the shoulder, with reflective material placed on guide wires
1438 and poles that are surrounded or at the very edge of the pavement.'05

1439 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1440 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and to enhance scenic views. '05

1441 The government should increase the level of maintenance to insure safe passage of
1442 vehicles. '04

1443 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1444 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of the
1445 tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous and diseased trees. '11

1446 We recommend that the State Highway Administration send advance notification to
1447 adjacent landowners whenever plantings are scheduled along the SHA right-of-way. '05

1448 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1449 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the trimming
1450 and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and simplify the
1451 permit process. '10

1452

1453

RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM

1454

1455 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
1456 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
1457 Preservation Program.'06

1457 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
1458 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
1459 '07

1460

1461

SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

School Standards

1463 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
1464 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
1465 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all and
1466 should be enforced by the school system. '07

1467 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

1468 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging in
1469 illegal drug activity. '07

School Lunches

1471 We urge the local school systems to purchase more locally grown products for the school
1472 breakfast and lunch programs. '09

1473 We urge the state to establish a farm-to-school program, which would allow for bidding
1474 exemptions, making it easier for schools and other institutions to buy directly from local farms.
1475 '08

School Year

1477 We oppose a year round and/or a staggered school year. We support a school year that
1478 starts after Labor Day and ends no later than the first week of June. '05

School Attendance Policy

1480 Participation in agricultural activities (e.g. 4-H, FFA and the Miss County or Miss
1481 Maryland Farm Bureau Programs) should be allowed as an excused absence and should not
1482 count against the number of allowable absences set by the county school system in question. '05
1483

1484 **SEAT BELTS**

1485 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other vehicles.
1486 '07

1487 **SEED TESTING**

1488 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a
1489 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider.'11

1490 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from licensed private facilities.'11

1491 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

1492 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate the current regulations concerning
1493 septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue economic
1494 hardship on landowners.'06

1495 We support requiring the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) septic systems in
1496 environmentally sensitive areas where significant impact to the Bay can be demonstrated. '11

1497 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

1498 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished land
1499 value incurred by any septic legislation. '11

1500 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1501 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
1502 the federal Class A standard. '07

1503 We support continued research into sludge use to assure proper application rates and
1504 practices that protect farmland. '04

1505 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
1506 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability and
1507 potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be imported into
1508 Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '08

1509 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be held
1510 accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
1511 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator.'08
1512 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a composite test be
1513 taken and recorded each day.'07

1514 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
1515 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'07

1516 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
1517 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '05

1518 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
1519 that are more restrictive than State standards. '09

1520 **STATE DESIGNATIONS**

1521 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1522 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts to
1523 change this designation. '07

1524 **STATE FFA**

1525 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education that a full-
1526 time permanent position be established to serve FFA youth in Maryland. This position should be
1527 field-based under the direction of the Vocational Technical Division. '05

1534 **STRAY VOLTAGE**

1535 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies
1536 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and
1537 livestock. '07

1538
1539 **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

1540 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that
1541 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

- 1542 1. It has to be profitable for farmers.
- 1543 2. It must work to conserve soil, water and nutrients with voluntary programs.
- 1544 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers.
- 1545 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply.
- 1546 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture. '08
- 1547 6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency. '10
- 1548 7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic farming practices. '10

1549
1550 **TAXES**

1551 **Admission and Amusement Tax**

1552 Recreational activities that are carried out in conjunction with a farm operation should be
1553 exempt from Admission and Amusement Tax.'06

1554 **Fuel Tax**

1555 We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to
1556 allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level.'10

1557 We oppose increasing the state fuel tax. '11

1558 **Income Tax**

1559 We promote a tax relief by way of a credit and/or a deduction for our senior citizens who
1560 are on Social Security that would compensate them for any major repair to their residences such
1561 as a new roof, well or septic system. This relief would help these seniors operating on a fixed
1562 income to maintain their homes and live within a familiar environment instead of feeling forced
1563 to consider a nursing home or extended living residence simply because they cannot afford the
1564 expense of a major repair. It is our desire to see that our seniors remain independent and self
1565 reliant as long as they feel capable. '05

1566 Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal
1567 tax code. '10

1568 **Inheritance Tax**

1569 First and foremost, we strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '04
1570 Until then, we support taxing nieces and nephews at the previous lineal tax rate on inherited
1571 property. '05

1572 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-
1573 owned agribusinesses. '05

1574 **Health Taxes**

1575 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '09

1576 **Maryland Estate Tax**

1577 We recommend that the estate tax exemption be increased to \$5 million. '11

1578 The tax on any value over \$5 million should be 10% or less. '11

1579 We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland. '07

1580 We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and
1581 conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax. '08

1582 The Maryland exemption for estate tax (\$1,000,000 in '05) should apply to every estate
1583 regardless of the size of the estate. '05

1584 In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use
1585 value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real
1586 estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate.
1587 '06

1588 **Property Tax**

1589 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm or
1590 agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '05

1591 When a farm joins an Ag Preservation District, a house and lot on that farm have certain
1592 restrictions placed on it. This house and lot (part of the district) should be taxed at a different rate
1593 than a single house and lot. '05

1594 The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly
1595 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '08

1596 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings. '08

1597 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
1598 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '06

1599 **Sales and Use Taxes**

1600 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
1601 related services from the state sales tax. '11

1602 In order to clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases,
1603 we recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt
1604 card. '08

1605 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '08

1606 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1607 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
1608 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
1609 operation or structure. '07

1610 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1611 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as general
1612 fund enhancements. '04

1613

1614 **TIMBER HARVESTING - STATE AND COUNTY LANDS**

1615 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1616 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest
1617 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1618 basis. '07

1619 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state and
1620 county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1621 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '08

1622

1623

TOBACCO

1624 **Master Settlement Agreement**

1625 We recommend that as the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is reviewed by the
1626 General Assembly each year the amount to be secured for the Southern Maryland farmers be at
1627 least kept at a minimum of 5% according to the original settlement agreement. '08

1628 **Tobacco Industry**

1629 We urge the state to rescind the restriction on the use of tobacco barns as stated in the
1630 Tobacco Buyout Contract. '06

1631 The State Tobacco Warehouse located in Cheltenham, Maryland was built entirely using
1632 funds derived from tobacco farmers. Therefore, we urge the Maryland Department of

1633 Agriculture to always consider any agricultural use as its top priority and leasing only be
1634 considered as a secondary use. '06

1635 **Tobacco Taxes**

1636 We oppose any increase in taxes on tobacco products. '09

1637

1638

TRESPASSING

1639 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.

1640 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
1641 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
1642 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
1643 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
1644 injury sustained by trespassers. '03

1645 The maximum fine should be raised to \$2000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
1646 destruction of property. '03

1647 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
1648 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs or
1649 paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission and to
1650 know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private land. '06

1651 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a jail
1652 term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine or serve the jail term if a minor is
1653 convicted. The offender should be required to pay the property owner for any destruction. In a
1654 case of a minor, the parents or guardians should be required to pay. '06

1655 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
1656 by others without written permission of up to \$2,500.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up to
1657 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore, violators
1658 should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '11

1659 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
1660 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
1661 existing laws and regulations. '07

1662

1663

TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES

1664 In order to achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1665 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion of this
1666 program; '08

1667 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient runoff
1668 into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban areas, as
1669 well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E. deicing aircraft and
1670 parking lots); '08

1671 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific research,
1672 as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately result in the
1673 Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1674 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with maximum
1675 cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the purchase of
1676 equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1677 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay in order to increase
1678 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '08

1679 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
1680 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08

1681 We oppose any consideration or action taken by the Patuxent River Commission to invite
1682 the National Park Service, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Agency, and other federal entities to join
1683 them in conducting a study of land and water use near the River. '04

1684

1685

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY

Bicycle Safety

1687 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
1688 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '07

1689 We recommend that scheduled bicycle events should be prohibited on roads without
1690 shoulders. '08

1691 While more bicycles are using rural roads earlier in the morning and later in the evening,
1692 we recommend that these bicycles display SMV signs because of the poor visibility during this
1693 time of day. '08

Driver Safety Rules

1695 We oppose any further restriction (beyond that in place in 2010) on the use of cell phones
1696 or similar devices in motor vehicles.'11

Fines & Surcharges

1698 We support the concept of allocation of truck fine revenues to the transportation fund. '07

1699 Present law only allows the driver of a truck to appeal a fine or violation against the truck
1700 or its contents. We recommend that the law be amended to allow the driver or the owner to
1701 make such an appeal. '06

Infrastructure Needs

1703 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
1704 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '08
1705 Inspections

1706 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
1707 motor vehicles.'07

1708 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.'07

Safe Movement of Farm Equipment

1710 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of farmers.

1711 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the proper
1712 use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend that a
1713 mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to aid in
1714 recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and roads in
1715 an effort to improve safety conditions. '07

1716 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow moving vehicle signs for any
1717 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced.'07

1718 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
1719 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
1720 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are (1)
1721 properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped approached
1722 another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the "other driver"
1723 being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her vehicle. '08

1724 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
1725 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
1726 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '08

Truck Regulations

1728 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent with
1729 those of neighboring states. '05

1730 We recommend that the allowable weight for tri-axle farm trucks with farm tags be
 1731 increased from 65,000 lbs to 70,000 lbs. '07
 1732 We support the Class K Farm Area vehicle registration. We encourage MVA to require
 1733 applicants to show proof of farming activity by providing a copy of their schedule F Tax form.
 1734 '07
 1735 Milk trucks should be allowed to be tagged to carry the same weight as a dump truck. '05
 1736 We recommend trucks hauling agricultural products that were loaded in fields or other
 1737 off-highway locations be allowed a Gross Vehicle Weight limit tolerance of up to 15% as well as
 1738 a 15% axle weight tolerance.'10
 1739 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal but an axle weight is off, enforcement personnel
 1740 should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '04
 1741 We urge the issuance of an overload permit program for agricultural vehicles hauling raw
 1742 agricultural products intrastate. '04
 1743 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products to
 1744 10 miles. '09
 1745 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws.'07
 1746 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
 1747 agricultural or commercial traffic on State highways. '11
 1748 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
 1749 '04
 1750 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '08
 1751 Vehicles with farm tag registrations should be exempt from the Inner Bridge Formula.
 1752 '07
 1753 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
 1754 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive Maintenance
 1755 Program. '05
 1756 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
 1757 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should be
 1758 established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time periods
 1759 to get them repaired. '08
 1760 We support legislation that would increase the maximum length for any combination of
 1761 vehicles with a power unit that is a cargo-carrying vehicle from 55 feet to 65 feet. . '08
 1762 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. 08
 1763 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within each
 1764 class. '08
 1765 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
 1766 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
 1767 transportation of farm commodities. '08
 1768

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEMS

Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority

1770 We recommend the University of Maryland systems establish an Ag Producers Board of
 1771 Advisors. '11
 1772 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
 1773 but not at the expense of "traditional crop" courses and research. '08
 1774 We urge the University of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional research as
 1775 is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support University of
 1776 Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education programs. '04
 1777 We recommend the reestablishment of the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to
 1778 advise and assist the UMD Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future
 1779

1780 structure of UMD Extension. This committee should consist of members selected from local
1781 Extension Advisory Committees to represent the different geographic regions of the state.'09

1782 **Funding**

1783 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
1784 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
1785 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
1786 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
1787 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
1788 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '00

1789 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
1790 for funding the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We
1791 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable funding
1792 support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the University. We
1793 also urge that the leadership for the Institute for Government Service be restored to the Extension
1794 Service.'11

1795 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

1796 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which provides assistance to
1797 farmers for business plan development. '08

1798 **Law School/Litigation**

1799 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
1800 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
1801 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state clients.
1802 Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm business
1803 should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being accepted by
1804 the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should provide equal
1805 representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '10

1806 **Plant Protection Center**

1807 We support the creation of and funding for the Maryland Plant Protection Center. '06

1808 **Research and Data**

1809 We support a joint effort by the University of Maryland and the MDA to develop and
1810 publish information that thoroughly and accurately describes the role of agriculture in the state's
1811 economy and in protecting and enhancing the state's natural resource base. '07

1812 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
1813 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system. '07

1814 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
1815 varieties of vegetables, fruits and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase competition
1816 with other areas of the country. '08

1817 We urge the University to reinstate the "Field Days" at the research farms. '04

1818 **Teacher Preparation**

1819 We urge the University of Maryland System to continue to develop a program to prepare
1820 teachers for their careers with courses in agri-science as a requirement towards their teaching
1821 degree. '08

1822 **Tuition**

1823 We believe that tuition increases at the schools within the University of Maryland System
1824 be limited to the cost of living index. '03

1825 **University of Maryland Extension**

1826 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
1827 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
1828 compete in a competitive market place. The strength of Extension has always been at the local

1829 level. We recommend that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
1830 Agent/Educator. '08
1831 We oppose the regionalization of county extension administrators. '11
1832 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to develop a nitrogen test to use in
1833 the fall prior to planting small grains. '08
1834 Due to agriculture's ever increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
1835 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment
1836 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
1837 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
1838 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11
1839 We strongly recommend that the University of Maryland maintain adequate staffing to
1840 write and certify nutrient management plans and to train individual farmers to write their own
1841 plans. '09
1842 We support maintaining the title "county agent". '08

WILDLANDS

1845 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
1846 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas
1847 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
1848 management plans. '08

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

1851 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to
1852 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to
1853 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident Canada
1854 geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative impacts on
1855 agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the Chesapeake Bay.
1856 '09

Bird Control

1858 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any
1859 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and
1860 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

Black Bear

1862 We support a regulated hunting season as a sound wildlife management tool in order to
1863 manage the State's black bear population in a safe and effective manner. '08

1864 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western Maryland
1865 to other counties.'07

Coyote

1867 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

Deer

1869 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of
1870 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '08

1871 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
1872 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
1873 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '08

- 1874 (1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '08
- 1875 (2) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
1876 seasons. '08
- 1877 (3) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd
1878 population count. '08

- 1879 (4) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
1880 areas. '04
- 1881 (5) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
1882 herd.'05
- 1883 (6) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '07
- 1884 (7) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent to
1885 agricultural lands. '11
- 1886 (8) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and processing
1887 harvested deer.'11
- 1888 (9) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
1889 management.'11
- 1890 (10) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
1891 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of deer
1892 population.'11
- 1893 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '10
- 1894 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
1895 tenant on private land. '08
- 1896 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a plan
1897 to manage and control wildlife populations. '08
- 1898 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an
1899 increase in state funding for the program. '08

1900 **Deer Crop Damage**

1901 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer and we support immediate
1902 enactment:

- 1903 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '08
- 1904 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '08
- 1905 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop within
1906 the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '08
- 1907 (4) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
1908 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use.
- 1909 (5) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
1910 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
1911 disposing properly should be eliminated.
- 1912 (6) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to use the weapon of choice
1913 within county regulations at all times for filling Deer Management permits during
1914 deer season.'11
- 1915 (7) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '11

1916 **Fox Chasing**

1917 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from landowners
1918 to conduct the hunt. '08

1919 **Furbearers**

1920 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

1921 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase a
1922 stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any fee.
1923 '08

1924 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

1925 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
1926 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture of
1927 fur-bearing wildlife. '10

1928 **Hunting Ethics and Liability**

1929 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
1930 taking place. '07

1931 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
1932 manner similar to motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record
1933 after an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

1934 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
1935 the maximum extent possible. '06

1936 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

1937 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
1938 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
1939 regulations. '08

1940 We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands. '10

1941 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
1942 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
1943 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
1944 during that season. '08

1945 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '10

1946 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '10

1947 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state.'07

1948 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland.'11

1949 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
1950 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren and employees when hunting only on that property.
1951 We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and his/her spouse,
1952 children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural purposes (or a
1953 sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this farmland. We are
1954 opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license exemption to persons
1955 (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under the age of 16.'06

1956 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
1957 hunting or trapping privileges. '11

1958 **Waterfowl**

1959 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
1960 Service to take any and all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow
1961 goose population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

1962 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
1963 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

1964 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
1965 throughout, starting about November 5th.'09

1966 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
1967 increase in bag limits. '08

1968 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

1969 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:

1970 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline.

1971 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09

1972 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of property
1973 lines. '08

1974 **Waterfowl Crop Damage**

1975 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

1976 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e. recorders or baiters) to
1977 reduce the snow goose population. '08

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WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY

We support the recognition of vineyards and wineries –and their related activities – as agriculture. We support the definition of winery to include vineyards, processing of grapes, wine making, storage of wine, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of wine and related products food service, and other associated activities. '07

We support the recognition of wineries as usage of right in agricultural and rural conservation zones. We support wineries' 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. '11

We support research and funding in cooperation with MDA and UMD that enhances the viability of commercial viticulture in Maryland. '10

We support the right of wineries to ship their wines to consumers both interstate and intrastate. '10

We support the inclusion of the inventory of grape production in the state in future MDA and NASS agricultural statistical surveys.'10

YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS

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

(1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '07

(2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling them farmland; '10

(3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation easements; '07

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

(5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them. '09

We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '09