



The Maryland Farm Bureau Hotline

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This week in Annapolis was busy with a final push to complete bill hearings as well as committee voting sessions. Maryland Farm Bureau staff focused on ensuring the farmers' voice was being heard on our priority bills. Next week is the last week for committee bill hearings before the March 18th crossover deadline. Next week will also be filled with committee voting sessions and lengthy floor debates. If floor sessions continue past noon, there's a good chance bill hearing times could be delayed next week.

We want to thank Farm Bureau members Allen Davis, Jonathon Quinn, Mary Lou Brown, and Jeff Petit for coming down and testifying on the nutrient management bill on Wednesday.

Here are the bills of interest for next week:

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

[HB1309 / SB0876](#) - Aquaculture - Leases in Water Column - Riparian Right of First Refusal

Delegate Crosby, E&T at 1:00pm in 250 HOB

Senator Bailey, EHEA at 1:00pm in 2 West Miller

This bill establishes that a riparian property owner or lessee shall have the right of first refusal to apply for and, if approved, obtain a water column lease, or an aquaculture lease for use in the water column in an Aquaculture Enterprise Zone and in an area that fronts the riparian property. The actively work the lease state requirement would not apply to a riparian property owner that exercises their right of first refusal and obtains the aquaculture lease.

This bill severely limits the ability for oyster aquaculture farmers to acquire aquaculture leases in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The process to apply for and be approved for an aquaculture lease is already an extensive process that can take multiple years to complete. However, allowing a landowner that has shoreline frontage to open and available aquaculture leases to have the right of first refusal to lease up these areas could eliminate the opportunities for new aquaculture leases that would actually be worked and produce oysters while cleaning up the Bay.

This type of legislation could set a precedent and set up the next type of legislation that would allow a landowner adjacent to a farm for rent to get the right of first refusal to rent the ground and not farm it.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES HB 1309 & SB 876

SB0888 - Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Deer Firearms Season

Senator Eckardt, at EHEA at 1:00pm in 2 West Miller

This bill authorizes a person in Dorchester County to hunt deer on private property on Sundays during the deer firearms hunting season.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 888

SB0889 - Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Deer Bow Hunting Season

Senator Eckardt, EHEA at 1:00pm in 2 West Miller

This bill authorizes a person in Dorchester County to hunt deer on private property on Sundays during the bow hunting season which runs from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 889

SB0890 - Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Deer Muzzleloader Season

Senator Eckardt, EHEA at 1:00pm in 2 West Miller

This bill authorizes a person in Dorchester County to hunt deer on private property on Sundays during the deer muzzleloader hunting season.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 890

SB0922 - Agriculture - Milk and Milk-Based Products - Labeling

Senator Gallion, EHEA at 1:00pm in 2 West Miller

This bill would prohibit anyone from selling, offering for sale, or advertising a product labeled as milk or milk-based if the product doesn't come from a cow or another type of animal. The premise behind this request is that at the federal level, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has a definition of milk, yet doesn't enforce this definition when reviewing product labels. FDA defines milk as: the lacteal secretion, practically free from colostrum, obtained by the complete milking of one or more healthy hooved mammals. North Carolina passed a similar bill in 2018.

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

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 922

SB0923 - Harford County - Hunting - Deer Management Permits

Senator Gallion, EHEA at 1:00pm in 2 West Miller

This bill adds Harford County to a list of shotgun-only hunting counties that would allow the use of a rifle for the harvesting of deer only under a Deer Management Permit. The regular deer firearms hunting season would still remain shotgun only. Currently, St. Mary's, Calvert and Charles counties have this provision in the law.

This bill will expand our farmers in Harford County's ability to utilize another tool in the toolbox in addressing the crop damage inflicted on their crops as a result of foraging deer herds. A Deer Management Permit does not allow nighttime shooting and is only permitted by DNR after DNR confirms crop damage due to deer. The DMP only allows the harvest of antlerless deer and all deer harvested are to be donated food to banks or processed for the farmer's own consumption.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 923

SB0939 - Natural Resources - Shellfish Nursery Operations - Wetlands License Requirements

Senator Klausmeier, EHEA at 1:00pm in 2 West Miller

This bill exempts an aquaculture operation from being required to obtain a tidal wetlands license or permit from the Department of the Environment or the Board of Public Works when installing a pump, a pipe, or any other equipment attached to a pier for the cultivation of shellfish seed in a shellfish nursery under a permit issued by the department of Natural Resources under § 4-11a-23 of the Natural Resources article, provided that the pump, pipe, or other equipment does not require increasing the length, width, or channel ward encroachment of the pier.

Shellfish aquaculture nurseries work their oysters on a regular basis to maximize health and growth of their oysters. Having to go to the Board of Public Works to get a permit to lay a 1-inch pipe on a pier is cumbersome and should be included in the existing permitting process the nurseries already have to get. This bill just adds nurseries to the list of exemptions already allowed under current law, yet still requires DNR approval.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 939

Maryland Farm Bureau members are urged to contact their legislators and members of the relevant committees in support of Farm Bureau's positions on the bills listed above. To contact legislators, log on to the Maryland General Assembly website at: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov> and select the "Legislators" Tab at the top.

Committees & Room Numbers:

Senate: Budget & Taxation (B&T), 3 West Miller; Education, Health & Environmental Affairs (EHEA), 2 West Miller; Finance (FIN), 3 East Miller; Judicial Proceedings (JPR), 2 East Miller

House: Appropriations (APP), 120 HOB; Economic Matters (ECM), 230 HOB; Environment & Transportation (E&T), 250 HOB; Health & Government Operations (HGO), 240 HOB; Judiciary (JUD), 100 HOB; Ways & Means (W&M) 130 HOB

In Other Ag News



Celebrate Maryland Wine Month

Members of the Maryland Wineries Association are preparing for a month-long celebration of the state's flourishing wine industry. Maryland Wine Month begins with events at numerous wineries on Friday, March 1. Several wineries are hosting unique educational events and tastings, while others are working with local restaurants to pair their wines during exclusive wine dinners. For more information, contact Jim Bauckman at 240-394-9202.

2018 Farm Bill Provides a Path Forward for Industrial Hemp

The inclusion of hemp in the 2018 farm bill has many people — both inside and outside the agriculture sector — racing to figure out the potential market for this relatively new agricultural product. Hemp's proponents are growing more optimistic and vocal each year about hemp as a potential game changer for U.S. agriculture. Visit the full article at <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/2018-farm-bill-provides-a-path-forward-for-industrial-hemp?>

Southern Maryland Ag Marketing Conference

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) is excited to host the first ever Southern Maryland Ag Marketing Conference on Saturday, March 30th at the College of Southern Maryland in Prince Frederick. This conference is designed for both beginning and experienced growers and farmers looking to brush up on their marketing skills before the 2019 season takes off. To register for the event please visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/southern-maryland-ag-marketing-conference-tickets-56082537379>.



Take a Stand for Clean Water and Clear Rules

We know environmental activist groups desperately want to impose and enforce the over-reaching 2015 Obama WOTUS Rule. As you know, the 2015 Obama WOTUS rule would have treated much of the landscape as though it were water itself. That wasn't just confusing, but also illegal, which is why so many federal courts blocked its implementation. For additional information please visit <https://www.fb.org/advocacy/action-alerts/clean-water-clear-rules/>.

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