



Maryland Farm Bureau

2021 Policy Book

*As Adopted by the Delegates at the 2020 Annual Meeting
December 7, 2020*

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1 **FOREWORD**

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

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

9 Farm Bureau policies stem from our belief that agriculture in Maryland is an essential
10 industry necessary to maintain the viability of our state. Farm families discuss issues, talk them
11 over in the community and make recommendations. County resolutions derived from these
12 community recommendations were adopted as policies on county issues and as
13 recommendations on state and national issues to the Maryland Farm Bureau. The policies
14 herein were derived from these county recommendations and became official Maryland Farm
15 Bureau policy for 2021 as set by voting delegates during the 105th annual convention of the
16 Maryland Farm Bureau on December 8, 2020.

17
18 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

19 **Career Technology Education**

20 We support the career technology education program in Maryland. We recommend
21 that local boards of education, with state support, introduce an approved production
22 agriculture program in Maryland junior/senior or senior high schools. We strongly recommend
23 that the State board of education institute standards for agricultural education programs that
24 include teaching agriculture, Ag economics and general agri-business. '19

25 We highly recommend MDFB have representation on boards and commissions at the
26 Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), especially in Career & Technology Education.
27 '20

28 **Community Colleges & Universities**

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

31 Maryland should fund the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for farmers.
32 '19

33 **Curriculum**

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

39 We urge the public schools to implement a certified/accredited agricultural curriculum
40 program in at least one high school in each county and Baltimore City. '19

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

43 We commend the Maryland Commission on Education in Agriculture for its study and
44 report concerning the enhancement of agricultural education in the state. We support the
45 Commission's recommendations to improve and enhance education in agricultural programs
46 throughout Maryland, especially the improved agricultural curriculum in Grades Pre-K-12 and

47 the recommendations for new and upgraded facilities. We encourage the continued efforts of
48 the Governor to expand and improve agricultural curriculum in the Maryland public school
49 system. '20

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

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

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

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

60 **Environmental & Agricultural Literacy Requirements**

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

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

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

70 We recommend that curriculum for environmental & agricultural literacy as a
71 requirement for graduation be reviewed by the MAEF Board. '19

72 **Funding for MAEF & Ag Education**

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

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

78 We oppose the huge cost of the Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education as
79 well as its lack of improvements for ag education. '19

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

81 **Teacher Training**

82 We recommend that training of teachers for Maryland public K-12 schools and colleges
83 include a mini-course in agriculture, and that state educational subdivisions include an in-
84 service day or days to instruct teachers and guidance counselors about agriculture and careers
85 in agriculture. '19

86 **Legislature Education**

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

90

91 **AGRICULTURAL FAIRS**

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

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

100 We oppose restrictions or bans on the types of animals that are shown at state, county,
101 and community agricultural fairs, shows and exhibitions. '17

102 **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION**

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

110 We strongly urge MALPF continue to be under the control and oversight of the Maryland
111 Secretary of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '15

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

116 We encourage neighboring counties to work cooperatively to achieve these goals
117 provided county sovereignty is respected and all planning and zoning decisions are made at the
118 county level. '16

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

123 The decision to target priority farms should be left to the county's agland preservation
124 board under the current MALPF funding formula. '10

125 We support the right for farms currently enrolled in ag land preservation programs to be
126 competitive with other farms and allowed to offer innovative agritourism options. '20

127 **Ag Preservation Funding**

128 We urge full funding by the state and counties for agland preservation programs,
129 including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program. Payments for
130 these programs should reflect current market values for farmland.'15

131 Farming that generates a profit should be an allowed use on agricultural land purchased
132 by the state, county, or municipalities. '17

133 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '09

134 We support the creation of a \$20 million annual bond fund for at least 10 years for
135 agland preservation and the Rural Legacy programs. '12

137 We support permanent annual funding of MARBIDCO's Next Generation Farmland
138 Acquisition Program. '17

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

141 We oppose any attempt to cap all transfer tax funds used for agricultural land
142 preservation programs. '15

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

145 We support an amendment of State Code Section 13-305 which removes the loophole
146 for developers paying the State Agricultural Transfer Taxes when farm properties are
147 transferred, developed, or taken out of agricultural use designation. '18

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

153 **Appraisals**

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

161 **Mapping**

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

165 **Maryland Agland Preservation Foundation**

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

- 170 (1) The "Right to Farm" provisions provided in the sale of Maryland agricultural land
171 easements should be extended to anyone who is enrolled in an agricultural district. '07
- 172 (2) We direct MALPF to allow other forms of income when it does not interfere with the
173 present agriculture operation or change the agricultural capabilities of the land including
174 expanded permitted uses such as ag tourism and value-added operations. '11
- 175 (3) We support the right of value-added agricultural businesses on MALPF land to sell products
176 not produced or grown on the farm as a secondary attraction (e.g. sandwiches, t-shirts,
177 small gifts). '07
- 178 (4) We recommend that farms be allowed into the MALPF program without regard to mineral
179 rights issues. '09
- 180 (5) We support the proposal to alter children's lots to allow the right to pass residual lots to a
181 new owner. '11
- 182 (6) We strongly urge MALPF to permit the onsite extraction of gas from farmland under MALPF
183 easement. '08

184 **Other Methods to Preserve Agland**

185 As another step toward preservation of agricultural land, we propose legislation to
186 create an Agricultural Land Condemnation Board, chaired by the State's Secretary of
187 Agriculture. Before anyone can condemn any productive agricultural lands for any purpose, the
188 involved body must appeal to the board. The board must determine that there is no
189 reasonable or prudent alternative. '05

190 We oppose the condemnation of prime and productive farmland for government
191 mandated mitigation projects without prior approval by the Agland Condemnation Board.'12

192 We support the establishment of a state level green payments program like the federal
193 Conservation Security Program. '06

194 **Transfer Development Rights**

195 We oppose the conveyance of Transferable Development Rights across county lines. '16

196 **Zoning**

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

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

202 We recommend that state required land use planning documents for Parks & Recreation
203 and Ag Preservation be prepared separately. '17

204

205 **AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

223 We encourage the state to work with USDA to develop a process by which locally
224 produced and processed meat and poultry can be shipped within and across state lines for sale
225 to local restaurants. This may include the state investing in MDA meat inspectors to provide
226 the necessary oversight at custom butcher shops.'13

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

230 We support legislation and improvements in regulations that allow farm breweries more
231 opportunities for direct consumer sales. '11
232 We support agritainment as an acceptable use of agricultural land. '13
233 Agritourism should be defined as activities conducted on a farm and offered to the
234 public or to invited groups for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in
235 the farm operation.'14
236 We support wedding and event venues as an accessory use on a working farm '16
237 We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture. '17
238 We oppose production of synthetically produced 'meats' being labeled as meat. '19
239 We support legislation to allow utility cooperatives to apply for grants to extend
240 broadband service to underserved rural areas. '19
241 We encourage the State of Maryland to review the regulation of Cottage Kitchens and
242 expand their capabilities as appropriate. '20
243

AGRICULTURAL WATER APPROPRIATION, USE AND CONSERVATION

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

Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. '18

We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean air (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in reducing equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. '18

We support a healthy environment, including good air quality, but we are opposed to emission control rules and standards for farm equipment that would require the retrofitting of our equipment to meet those standards. '18

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

We oppose regulations dealing with exhaust of ammonia or methane gases from agricultural activities. '18

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

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

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

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

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

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

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

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

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

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

ALCOHOL PRODUCTION – ON FARM

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

We support the definition of winery to include vineyards, processing of grapes, 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 definition of farm brewery to include agricultural products used for brewing, processing of hops and grains, malting, fermentation, storage of beer, promotional

321 events, tasting rooms, sales of beer and related products, food service, and other associated
322 activities. '15

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

327 We support the recognition of wineries, farm breweries and farm distilleries as usage of
328 right in agricultural and rural conservation zones. '15

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

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

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

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

337

338

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR FARM PRODUCTS

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

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

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

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

349

350

ANIMAL CARE

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

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

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

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

360 We continue to urge members and other agricultural groups and businesses to assist in
361 educating the food industry, school children, the public and those elected to represent us in
362 government on animal production techniques recognized as best management practices,
363 explaining that good growth and production cannot exist if animals are under stress, mistreated
364 or abused and that proper animal care is in the best interest of both the animal and the farmer.
365 '18

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

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

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

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

376 **Antibiotic Feed Additives**

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

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

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

382

383 **ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY FACILITIES**

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

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

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

392

393

394 **AQUACULTURE**

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

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

402 We support legislation that will strengthen laws related to theft of oysters from
403 aquaculture operations, including enforcement of oyster theft under criminal property larceny
404 charges and making it an automatic felony after a certain number of times being caught
405 stealing oysters or if a certain number of bushels of oysters is reached. We also support
406 amending the elements of the current criminal charge law to allow proof of cut buoys versus
407 those frayed by natural causes. We recommend changes to the Natural Resources Article to
408 include language to enforce Maryland's criminal property larceny law against not only oyster
409 aquaculture thieves who knowingly steal from aquaculture leases, but also those who
410 knowingly possess illegally harvested oysters. '20

411

412

413 **AQUATIC RESOURCES – SEAFOOD**

413 We recognize that Blue Crabs in the Chesapeake Bay are a highly valuable resource for
414 both commercial and recreational activities. Regulations controlling this fishery should be

415 managed through modern data collection and sound science, with input from all stakeholders
416 as well as the Bi-State Blue Crab Technical Committee and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. '06

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BEEKEEPING

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BROWNFIELDS

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CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP

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

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

We support the planting of pollinator habitat as long as the habitat is not a noxious or invasive species of plants '15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

470 We support the allowance of tax credits to be sold through a broker system based on
471 the current income tax subtraction modification for the purchasing of conservation equipment
472 '15

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

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

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

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

481 **Storm water Management Regulations and Fees**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

511

512 COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING

513 Farmers' Markets

514 We strongly encourage the continuance of all farmers' markets. '07

515 We support legislation that will promote farmers' markets by creating a central registry
516 of Maryland farmers' markets, to include roadside stands, agricultural product sales locations,
517 or other locations that advertise, promote, or use the term "farmers' market." '17

518 We encourage legislation that will limit legal liability to registered farmers' market
519 operators. '17

520 We oppose the use of title "Farmers' Market" for a store that is not truly a Farmers'
521 Market. We urge Maryland to adopt a law like the one invoked in Maine to define how and
522 when the term Farmers' Market may be used. '19

523 Grain Dealers

524 We recommend that all grain dealers in the state of Maryland should have certified
525 grain-testing personnel. We request that samples taken for moisture tests be free and clear of
526 foreign materials. We support the voluntary establishment of standards for moisture discounts,
527 which separate shrinkage, and the drying cost and which are not tied to the price paid for the
528 grain. '14

529 Labeling Requirements

530 Since the risk of illness from unpasteurized cider is no greater than the risk of illness
531 from any other food source, we do not support any labeling of cider beyond whether it is
532 pasteurized. '07

533 We strongly support truth in labeling of food and food products. '17

534 MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts

535 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise.
536 We urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's
537 efforts to improve marketing services. We support the "Maryland's Best" marketing
538 program. '12

539 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that
540 serve all citizens. '07

541 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Economic Development to
542 continue its policy of providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural
543 industries. '06

544 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of
545 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities. '13

546 We support state grants and financial support for local co-ops, marketing, and food
547 processing facilities. '18

548 Deep Water Terminal

549 We support a viable grain export terminal. '07

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

552 Roadside Markets

553 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural
554 products. '06

555 We encourage the enforcement of existing county zoning laws related to farmers'
556 markets and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer
557 merchants and/or non-local merchants. '10

558 **Roadside Signs**

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

562 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

563 We oppose any segment of the farm community promoting their production methods as
564 healthier or better for the environment without evidence to support those claims.'12

565 **Value Added**

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

567

568

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

569 **Best Management Practices**

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

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

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

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

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

584 **Conservation Practices**

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

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

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

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

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

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

603 **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

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

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

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

614 Our proposed changes include the following:

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

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

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

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

642

643

COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

644 **Cover Crop Program**

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

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

685 **Cost Share Programs**

- 686 Cost share programs need to expand to include small animal unit operations. '14
 687 We recommend the flat rates and components of a practice be reviewed and revised
 688 annually with agricultural input to reflect current cost. '14
 689 Maryland farmers/agricultural organizations should have input into state cost share
 690 program changes before those changes are implemented. '14
 691 We recommend that NRCS, Soil Conservation District and Maryland Department of
 692 Agriculture resources be increased, and/or the approval process be streamlined to reduce a
 693 backlog of cost share applications. '16

694 We recommend that the State fund the MACS program with General Obligation Bonds.
695 '17
696 We urge MDA's Maryland Ag Cost Share (MACS) program establish a higher cost-share
697 rate for Young and Beginning Farmers. '20
698 The State should continue to fund the Manure Transport cost-share program. '20
699

CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION

701 We recommend that the membership of the Critical Areas Commission be comprised of
702 at least 50% farmers who own property within 1,000 feet of the critical area.'07
703 Due to the impact on the agricultural community, we urge county governments to work
704 with their county Farm Bureaus when they develop their local programs. '07
705 We are opposed to the inclusion of upstream tributaries and non-tidal water into the
706 Critical Areas Program.'07
707 We support legislation that would require the state to compensate, at the fair market
708 value, Maryland property owners who are monetarily affected by the Critical Area Legislation
709 and/or the Endangered Species Act. '08
710 The inability to harvest timber in the critical areas is creating an inequitable financial
711 loss for the landowner. We recommend that the landowner be compensated for this loss.'07
712 We are concerned about exemptions granted within the Critical Area for marinas and
713 other recreational water related activities. '08
714

CROP PROTECTION

715 We urge keeping all federally labeled crop protection products legal in the state,
716 counties, and municipalities. '19
717 We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them
718 by approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '19
719 In order to help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to
720 maintain a biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old
721 chemicals, chemical containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '19
722 We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned
723 chemicals. '19
724 Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water
725 contaminated by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to
726 label instructions. '19
727 Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not
728 on emotional issues. '19
729 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The
730 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an
731 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to
732 farm his property. '19
733 We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to
734 aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '19
735 We oppose the collection and distribution of pesticide use data beyond that collected in
736 the USDA NASS survey. '19
737 We oppose the establishment of a pesticide use data reporting system that would make
738 information available to the public or to "interested" researchers. '19
739

740 **Disease Prevention & Pest Control**

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

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

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

749 **Environmental Surcharge**

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

752 **Pesticide Stewardship**

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

755

756

DAIRY INDUSTRY

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

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

763 We support the Maryland Dairy Industry Association and urge farmers to join. '17

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

766 **Milk Marketing**

767 Maintaining consumer confidence in dairy products is critical to the viability of the dairy
768 industry. Dairy product labeling should be truthful, accurate and be able to be substantiated.
769 '17

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

773 All references to unpasteurized milk should be termed as "raw milk" only. '17

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

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

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

778 We urge Maryland Public Schools to add a minimum of 1% flavored milk to the food
779 options. '18

780 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

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

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

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DREDGE SPOIL

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

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

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

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

ENDANGERED SPECIES

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

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

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

Endangered species protection should not go beyond those species protected by federal law. ’07

Any plant or animal that is taken because of an agricultural practice shall be considered an incidental taking. ’07

We support the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reassess and possibly remove the Delmarva Fox Squirrel from the endangered species list. ’12

ENERGY POLICY

We strongly support a comprehensive, long-term energy policy that fully utilizes domestic energy resources and aggressively promotes the role of agriculture. ’19

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

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

We urge that farm rates and demand charges be comparable across electric providers. ’19

Ethanol & Bio-Diesel Fuel

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

We urge the use of some ethanol in gasoline and soy diesel in diesel fuel. ’19

We urge research and education on the use of ethanol in all engines at 10 percent and higher blends to ensure we meet the Renewable Fuel Standard goal of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuel use by 2025. ’19

We urge new research to improve ethanol compatibility with farm equipment. ’19

We urge that all state and county government vehicles (including school buses) be required to use bio diesel or ethanol fuels. ’19

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

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

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

838 We urge the support of government agencies such as the Department of Business &
839 Economic Development (DBED) in the development of biofuels in Maryland. '19

840 **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

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

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

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

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

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

852 We oppose commercial solar energy facilities being considered as an agricultural activity
853 and receiving the same exemptions as an agricultural structure or agland. This would also
854 include receiving the agricultural tax assessment. '19

855 We oppose the use of "farm" when referring to an alternative energy generation facility.
856 '19

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

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

861 We do not support commercial solar energy facilities being built on prime and
862 productive farmland specifically priority preservation areas. '19

863 We encourage that brownfields, and urban areas be utilized to assist with the clean
864 energy mandate in lieu of prime and productive farmland '19

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

867 **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

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

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

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

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

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

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ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING

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

EQUINE INDUSTRY

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

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

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

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

FAMILY VALUES

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

FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES

We recommend that the State FSA Administration grant more power to the county committees to adequately staff county offices. ’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. ’14

FOREST CONSERVATION

The Forest Conservation Act of 1991 has far reaching language, including reforesting 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

We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with regards to the harvesting of trees. ’06

Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural lands under the state of Maryland’s conservation or land use programs. ’08

We recognize the need for funding for research of the Emerald Ash Borer to create potential options to contain, eliminate and determine if it will affect any other species of trees. ’15

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GAMBLING

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

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

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

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

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

We Support GMO policy decisions only at the federal government level and not at the state government level '15

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

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS – STATE GOVERNMENT

Elected Officials

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

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

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

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

Ethics

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

Government Spending

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

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

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

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

Maryland Department of Agriculture

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

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

972 **Regulatory Reform**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1000 **State and Local Agencies**

1001 We support mental health programs and services to the Agricultural Community that
1002 provide education and information on where to obtain mental health services. '19

1003 We support the co-location of Ag agencies, Ag education and resources in regional Ag
1004 centers when feasible. '19

1005 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '19

1006 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
1007 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the
1008 Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict
1009 the access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on
1010 private property to no greater than can law enforcement agencies. '19

1011 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
1012 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
1013 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate
1014 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
1015 practices. '19

1016 **State Owned Farmland**

1017 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
1018 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
1019 converted to conservation uses. '19

1020 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

1021 Considering the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension
1022 program to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the
1023 present state pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '19

1024

1025 **GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

1026 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We
1027 recognize the value of urban greenways but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural
1028 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with
1029 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or
1030 rails to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that
1031 adjoins the proposed greenway before a study commences.'07

1032 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any
1033 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the
1034 opportunity for input. Also, the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail
1035 use on the safety, health, security, privacy, and economic interests of the adjacent landowners
1036 and determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail
1037 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,
1038 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use
1039 of the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for
1040 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers.'10

1041

1042 **GYPSY MOTH CONTROL**

1043 We recommend that the state gypsy moth control program be maintained at a 250 egg
1044 masses per acre baseline. '18

1045

1046 **INSURANCE**

1047 **Crop Insurance**

1048 We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a
1049 tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. '07

1050 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

1051 Health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-
1052 employed individuals. '13

1053 We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated
1054 health insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits to better manage health
1055 insurance costs. '05

1056 We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge
1057 the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of
1058 quality health care. '13

1059 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent
1060 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.'06

1061 We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits
1062 to long-term care insurance. '10

1063 **Insurance Rates**

1064 We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates
1065 throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on
1066 experience ratings. '05

1067 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry because
1068 of claims that are considered "Act of God" incidents. '16

1069

1070 **JOHNE'S DISEASE**

1071 We acknowledge that the Maryland Department of Agriculture has made progress with
1072 the John's program and request continued support for it. '05

1073

1074 **LABOR STANDARDS**

1075 We oppose overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. '14

1076 We support maximum opportunities for youth to work on farms. We believe youth gain
1077 important life skills, learn safety around animals and equipment, benefit from involvement in
1078 programs like 4-H and FFA, become interested in careers in agriculture, better understand that
1079 farmers are professionals and use best management practices, and establish a strong work
1080 ethic. Therefore, we urge government not to limit these opportunities. '12

1081 We support the passage of legislation to exempt agriculture workers and point of sale
1082 workers in agriculture from minimum wage increase requirements. '20

1083

1084 **LAND STEWARDSHIP**

1085 Realizing that stewardship of the earth is in the public interest, we support the
1086 recognition of agriculture as a proper and environmentally sound use of our land resources. '06

1087

1088 **LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING**

1089 **Annexation**

1090 Each Maryland county should have the authority to regulate all municipal annexations
1091 within the county. '05

1092 **Growth Management**

1093 We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations
1094 within our state. '11

1095 We oppose any state policy that overrides county planning and zoning authority. '12

1096 We oppose the premise of Plan Maryland and urge the state to slow down the process
1097 for considering it to give counties and citizens time to thoroughly review the plan. Any
1098 benchmarks and/or consequences established must be clearly defined and the final plan should
1099 be subject to approval by the General Assembly prior to implementation. '11

1100 Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties.
1101 Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural
1102 counties. '08

1103 We believe no program (or parts of a program) should be adopted until we review and
1104 evaluate the accumulative impact of all our present programs. We need to know the inter-
1105 relationship of all the legislation and regulations dealing with growth management such as the
1106 Chesapeake Bay critical area law; the Nontidal Wetland Protection Act; federal, state, and local
1107 resource protection programs; the agricultural land preservation program; Program Open
1108 Space; and the reforestation law passed by the General Assembly. '05

1109 We support a requirement for local governments to consider the impact of new
1110 development on water resources and current users. Development should not be allowed to
1111 surpass the level of water resources. '07

1112 Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's
1113 property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '06

1114 We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).
1115 '10

1116 **Permitting**

1117 We support the continued exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building
1118 permits and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the zoning code. We further
1119 support the inclusion of specific language in the building code to permit public access to
1120 existing, structurally sound, nonresidential buildings without mandated upgrades to the full
1121 current codes. '05

1122 **Reverse Setbacks & Buffers**

1123 We urge elected officials and county planners to require protective measures for
1124 farmland, such as reverse setbacks, buffers, fencing, etc. for new non-agricultural uses
1125 occurring adjacent to existing agricultural operations. '14

1126 **Zoning**

1127 We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their
1128 efforts to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners
1129 involved should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land-use criteria
1130 changes. Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall
1131 provide for just compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no down zoning
1132 on agriculture land. '07

1133 Zoning regulations should be determined at the local, not state level.'08

1134 We are opposed to Regional Planning Authorities. '08

1135 Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or
1136 default. '08

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

1139 **Penalties & Confinement**

1140 We urge the state to increase penalties for defacing and removal of "Mason-Dixon Line"
1141 markers. '05

1142 We favor adequate prison facilities so that inmates can serve their sentences. We
1143 recommend that inmates in minimum security penal complexes be required to work on
1144 highways, prison farms or other public projects to help defray the cost of their food and
1145 support and to pay restitution to their victims. We also favor emphasis on the rehabilitation of
1146 persons confined to penal institutions to afford them a better opportunity to assume a
1147 constructive role in society. '06

1148 We believe that the State of Maryland should enact legislation providing for a
1149 mandatory life sentence without parole, or a death sentence, for violent murder offenses and
1150 murder offenses occurring during the illegal transportation and/or distribution of controlled
1151 dangerous substances (drugs). '05

1152 We urge the Department of Corrections to return prisoners to their county of origin
1153 after the completion of their sentence before their release.'07

1154 We support legislation that would prevent elected officials from holding office if
1155 convicted of a crime or of misconduct in office and from receiving pensions or benefits
1156 pertaining to the office that they held.'06

1157 **Judicial Process**

1158 We recommend that the defendants be brought to a speedy trial and if convicted, given
1159 a sentence sufficient to discourage further crimes. We support consistency in judicial
1160 sentencing for all.'07

1161 We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity
1162 defense of "innocent by reason of insanity" to "guilty, but insane." '05

1163 **Investigation of Crimes**

1164 We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between
1165 jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. '07

1166 We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who
1167 damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.'06

1168 To deter copper thefts, we propose a mandatory waiting period between the sale and
1169 the payment for certain salvaged material. '11

1170 We support increasing the penalties for and the efforts to investigate and prosecute
1171 agriculture and aquaculture related crimes. '20

1172 We support maintaining adequate police force funding to fully meet the
1173 needs of rural communities and agricultural producers. '20

1174

1175 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

1176 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law
1177 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

1178

1179 **LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS**

1180 The State of Maryland should institute policy whereby unsuccessful plaintiffs initiating
1181 litigation against farm operations in Maryland shall be liable for the defendant's legal fees and
1182 appropriate damages if the defendant prevails in the course of the suit.'12

1183 **Contributory Negligence**

1184 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock
1185 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a
1186 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's
1187 responsible actions. '04

1188 **Agricultural Immunity,**

1189 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '06

1190 We support immunity from liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers to afford
1191 the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '14

1192

1193 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

1194 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public
1195 monies.'06

1196

1197 **LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY**

1198 Government officials and inspectors must be required to follow stringent biosecurity
1199 practices and respect private property rights at all times when visiting farms. '17

1200 We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. '17

1201 We urge MDA to work with USDA to review and clarify the tagging process under the
1202 Premise ID program for all livestock producers. '17

1203

1204 **LOCAL/TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

1205 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08

1206 We support the State of Maryland increasing funding to the Tri-County Councils for the
1207 purpose of including and funding agricultural and natural resources development in their
1208 mission. '20

1209

1210 **MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

1211 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow hemp as an agricultural crop. '19

1212 We oppose the production and sale of recreational marijuana. '19

1213

1214 **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

1215 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the
1216 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as
1217 necessary, including the purchase of needed equipment. '15

1218

1219 **NONTIDAL WETLANDS**

1220 We oppose the present definition of Nontidal wetlands as set forth in the 1989 "Federal
1221 Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands." This definition would designate many acres of
1222 marginal wetlands that possess minimal wetlands values. It would also include many acres of
1223 cropland that has been farmed historically. '05

1224 We support the revision of the "Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands"
1225 to exclude:

1226 (1) cropland that was farmed prior to the enactment of any laws dealing with the
1227 regulation; '05

1228 (2) areas with woody or natural vegetation that are not ponded for more than fifteen
1229 consecutive days during some part of the growing season. '05

1230 This definition should also be used for any existing or proposed state legislation. It is
1231 imperative that the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the
1232 Natural Resource Conservation Service review the definition of Nontidal wetlands and evaluate
1233 its implications on agriculture. Furthermore, it is our belief that all three of the criteria should
1234 exist before land is considered a wetland and we hope the manual will be amended
1235 accordingly. '05

1236 We support the designation of the Natural Resource Conservation Service as the lead
1237 agency for the development of uniform wetlands delineation. '06

1238 Agriculture needs to be exempt from mitigation for agricultural activities where the
1239 farmer has and is carrying on good agricultural practices. '07

1240 We recommend that when wetlands are identified, property owners must be notified,
1241 and an appeal or review process be developed. '07

1242 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should
1243 be deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly
1244 compensated." '08

1245 Maryland regulations should not be more stringent than the federal regulations
1246 regarding non-tidal wetlands in agricultural land. '08

1247 We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that
1248 they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of
1249 public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost
1250 of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved. '08
1251 We urge local control of regulations and permits limiting the use of wetlands.'07

1252 NOXIOUS WEEDS

1253 Noxious Weed List

1254 We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, kudzu,
1255 multi-flora rose (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry), Japanese stiltgrass,
1256 Palmer Amaranth, Asiatic tearthumb (mile-a-minute vine) and Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven)
1257 placed on the noxious weed list. '20

1258 We urge the SHA to submit a realistic fiscal impact statement related to adding palmer
1259 amaranth to the noxious weed list. '18

1260 Compliance on Government-Owned Land and Private Land Under Government Contract

1261 We insist that local, county, state, federal governments, and public utilities control
1262 invasive species and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by
1263 them. '18

1264 We urge FSA and NRCS to educate private landowners about invasive species of weeds
1265 and control methods before and during the contract period. '18

1266 Enforcement

1267 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the
1268 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,
1269 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's
1270 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '18

1271 We recommend increasing the funding to provide proper enforcement of the noxious
1272 weed law and maintain a viable education, prevention, and treatment program. '18

1273 We recommend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators
1274 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are
1275 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1276 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1277 non-crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all the control methods outlined by the
1278 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '18

1279 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1280 conservation programs, so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1281 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '18

1282 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop procedures for adding
1283 new weeds to the noxious weed list. These procedures should include an estimate of the cost
1284 to control the weed. '18

1285 Public Education

1286 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1287 public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of noxious weeds. '18

1288 Weed Control Methods

1289 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1290 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and
1291 eliminate these noxious weeds. '18

1294 At present, seeds for bird feed are not regulated, and some mixtures contain noxious
1295 weed seed from both domestic and imported sources. We recommend legislation that will
1296 require all bird feed (seeds) be free of noxious weed seeds that are capable of germination. '18
1297 We support the state providing cost share for control of noxious weeds and other weeds
1298 of concern. '18

1299 We support counties and the state to work with HOAs, Forest Conservation Easements
1300 and Storm Water Management Areas to control their noxious weeds and weeds of concern. '18

1301 **Weeds of Concern**

1302 We urge MDA in cooperation with University of Maryland Extension to create a weeds
1303 of concern program that identifies new or herbicide resistant weeds of concern, educates state
1304 agencies, landowners and farmers on how to identify and manage these weeds, and
1305 encourages state agencies, landowners and farmers to implement best management practices
1306 to control these weeds. '18

1307

1308 **NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT**

1309 **Nutrient Management for Farms**

1310 We believe in a voluntary nutrient management program and that all farmers should
1311 apply nutrients in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound
1312 science. '07

1313 MDA should maintain sole responsibility for implementation and enforcement of
1314 nutrient management plans. '09

1315 We support a nutrient management program that: (1) produces real water quality
1316 improvement, (2) makes efficient use of taxpayer funds, (3) requires reasonable recordkeeping,
1317 (4) protects civil liberties and private property rights, (5) provides adequate flexibility for
1318 farmers to properly manage their operations, (6) provides appropriate inspection and
1319 enforcement, and (7) provides appropriate incentives to offset operating and capital costs
1320 incurred by complying with the requirements of the program. '12

1321 We are opposed to the changes to the nutrient management regulations, which make
1322 MD agriculture less competitive by increasing the cost and difficulty of farming in Maryland
1323 without compensation. '13

1324 We urge the state to exercise flexibility for agricultural nutrient management activities.
1325 '10

1326 We recommend that MDA and the University of Maryland review and update the
1327 nitrogen use recommendations in UMD's Numan Pro software program, which is used for
1328 nutrient management plans. '18

1329 We recommend the composting of animals be an approved method of disposing of
1330 animal mortalities on the farm. '17

1331 The state should not expand the Phosphorus Management Tool as long as the
1332 agricultural community is on track to meet the 2025 WIP clean-up goal. '18

1333 We support delaying the full implementation of the Phosphorus Management Tool until
1334 the science behind the tool is validated. '19

1335 We request a review and simplification of guidelines and requirements of the nutrient
1336 management program to achieve the following:

- 1337 a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- 1338 b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations.
1339 '05
- 1340 c. Prevent yield capping. '05

1341 d. Allow the use of scientifically valid nutrient recommendations from the University of
1342 Maryland or other public and private sources. '18

1343 e. The elimination of the Nutrient Management Voucher requirements and the transfer of
1344 the resultant savings to Extension for nutrient management plan writing. '10

1345 f. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12

1346 g. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on
1347 an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14

1348 h. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and
1349 technologies. '18

1350 MDA should inform the landowner of the nature of the complaint whenever it inspects a
1351 farm based on a complaint. '09

1352 We support the continuation of the farmer-filed annual certification of plan compliance
1353 along with an annual summary of nutrient application rather than requiring the filing of the
1354 completed plan. '06

1355 MDA should develop an optional on-line reporting system for the annual summaries. '09

1356 **Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality**

1357 Nutrient Management plans contain proprietary information and must remain
1358 confidential. Therefore, we oppose the release of a farmer's state or privately written nutrient
1359 management plan (or data related to the plan) to the public by MDA or any other government
1360 entity. '10

1361 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date, they should
1362 be properly destroyed. '08

1363 **Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education**

1364 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1365 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '13

1366 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**

1367 We seek full funding for Nutrient Management Cost-Share for the development and
1368 updating of nutrient management plans by private industry and by University of Maryland
1369 Extension. All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '12

1370 We request that funding for nutrient management education and plan development go
1371 directly to University of Maryland Extension to hire and maintain adequate permanent nutrient
1372 management advisors in each county. '10

1373 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1374 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1375 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1376 We strongly oppose the Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised
1377 Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by MDE. '12

1378 We oppose public hearings for CAFO permit renewals that do not include facility
1379 expansion or modification. '16

1380 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1381 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1382 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '11

1383 We strongly oppose any fee structure for reviewing or inspecting MAFO or CAFO
1384 operation by MDE '14

1385 We support transferring the MAFO permitting program from MDE to MDA while
1386 decoupling the NPDES permitting process from the MAFO permit. '17

1387 **Manure and Litter Management**

1388 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for
1389 crop production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '20

1390 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.
1391 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies – beyond those previously conducted by
1392 UMD researchers – that include different soil types, locations, and manure types before any
1393 ban on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1394 Universities within the Bay Watershed should collaboratively research the benefits of
1395 organic nutrients vs. commercial fertilizer on leachable soil types and soils with high water
1396 tables. '13

1397 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1398 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1399 We support diversion of manure from Equine operations from going to county landfills.

1400 We encourage government funding of composting facilities. '18

1401 We oppose being required to field stack mushroom soil compost. '18

1402 We support increased funding of the Manure Transport Program to assist with transport
1403 and movement of livestock manure and poultry litter to all parts of the State. '20

1404 **Soil Testing**

1405 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1406 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '13

1407

1408

NUTRIENT TRADING

1409 We oppose any form of government mandated and controlled trading for the
1410 compliance for nutrient reductions from point sources of nutrient loading in lieu of Biological
1411 Nutrient Reduction (BNR) upgrading or delaying of any sewage treatment facility upgrades. '10

1412 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient reduction that allow farmers to receive
1413 fair compensation for nutrient removal and/or reductions. '16

1414 We support allowing Shellfish/Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for
1415 Maryland to meet its water quality goals. '16

1416 We oppose using the wastewater treatment plant's portion of the flush tax dollars to
1417 jump start a Maryland nutrient trading program. '16

1418

1419

POULTRY INDUSTRY

1420 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter.
1421 '17

1422 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a
1423 cost-share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the
1424 mandatory covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '17

1425 We oppose any effort to mandate moving poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '17

1426 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy
1427 generation. '17

1428 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1429 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere
1430 in the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '17

1431 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research-based guidelines for field
1432 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1433 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '17

1434 We oppose government regulations that would require chicken grower/poultry
1435 company layout policies. '17

1436 We support Delmarva Poultry Industry's (DPI) best management practices for good
1437 neighbor relations, which cover house location on property, manure handling practices, carcass
1438 disposal system, vegetative buffers, odor prevention & control, and contact with neighbors. '17

1439 We oppose state mandated air quality monitoring or air filtering on poultry houses over
1440 and above DPI's best management practices for good neighbor relations. '17

1441

1442

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

1443 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1444 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner.'07

1445 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production
1446 of an agricultural commodity on farmland. '07

1447 We oppose any mandatory retirement of land for buffers and setbacks. '12

1448 Government action that diminishes a property's value or an owner's right to use his
1449 property constitutes a taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should
1450 provide due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been
1451 diminished. The just basis for compensation must be at least fair market value. '14

1452 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and
1453 state levels. '07

1454 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the
1455 party disputing any property lines. '06

1456 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to
1457 notify all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified
1458 letter, in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '11

Eminent Domain

1460 We believe the Supreme Court "Kelo" decision violates the basic principles and
1461 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1462 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1463 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet.
1464 We believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land
1465 and then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage
1466 of legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1467 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop.
1468 '06

1469 We urge the elimination of the "quick take" condemnation process. '12

1470 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1471 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1472 property.'10

1473 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.
1474 '06

1475 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for
1476 the purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original

1477 landowner or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other
1478 than for which it was originally acquired. '05
1479 We urge that the compensation must include the total devaluation of the farm due to
1480 the negative impact, including visual, of any eminent domain project. '17

1481

1482 **PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS**

1483 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1484 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of parkland being purchased in this
1485 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1486 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1487 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to
1488 use part or all their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1489 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1490 '15

1491 We urge Program Open Space revenues that were diverted to the General Fund to be
1492 repaid. '14

1493 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1494 present parkland rather than the acquisition of new land.'06

1495 We urge that the open space program continue to receive 0.5% of the Maryland real
1496 estate transfer tax. '15

1497

1498 **PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS**

1499 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1500 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding.'07

1501 Also, we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property
1502 owners of the easement rights of the PDA.'06

1503 We oppose any effort to usurp control of PDA maintenance from the PDA managers.
1504 Any federal, state, or private conservation practices should not prevent, hinder, or interfere
1505 with the maintenance of the PDA main, tributary, or right of way. '18

1506

1507 **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

1508 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1509 present to the public of the state. We urge the State and County Health Departments to gather
1510 as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs, and treatment of
1511 these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information. '06

1512 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1513 problem to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state. '06

1514 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1515 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

1516

1517 **PUBLIC OWNED LAND**

1518 Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in
1519 production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '18

1520 We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to
1521 acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to
1522 parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by
1523 willing sellers only. '18

1524 In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the
1525 governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges and wild lands to
1526 determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate
1527 the sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '18

1528 The state should compensate counties for the loss of property tax revenue on public
1529 lands. '18

1530 We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or
1531 other recreational uses to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and administering these
1532 lands. '18

1533 We urge the state to require and implement a wildlife management plan for all public,
1534 wild and forest land. '18

1535 **Timberland Management**

1536 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use
1537 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting
1538 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '18

1539

1540

PUBLIC RELATIONS

1541 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome, and most affordable food in the
1542 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the
1543 media unless substantiated and accurate. '08

1544 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.
1545 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based
1546 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors, and
1547 subsequent retailers. '08

1548 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and
1549 information regarding the local farm community. '08

1550 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the
1551 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland
1552 agriculture to the public through various media outlets. '08

1553 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that
1554 would:

- 1555 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1556 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1557 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the
1558 environment.
- 1559 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals, and educational displays.
- 1560 5. Include a speaker's bureau. '08

1561 We encourage state, county, and local government officials to take a more active role in
1562 supporting, promoting, and defending agriculture. '09

1563

1564

RAILROADS

1565 Where economically feasible, we urge the state government to take whatever action
1566 necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade them where necessary, including
1567 adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

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RECYCLING

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

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

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

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

Tire Fund & Tire Recycling

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

RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS

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

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

1613 **RIGHT-TO-FARM**

1614 To maintain the right to farm, we recognize our individual responsibility as farmers to
1615 help maintain the positive image of the ag industry by being respectful and courteous
1616 neighbors. '20

1617 We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect
1618 the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce
1619 without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to
1620 ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal
1621 production practices. '20

1622 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland "Right-to-Farm" Law and recommend that it
1623 should be strengthened to protect and promote the enhancement of all commodities. '20

1624 We support an amendment to Maryland's Constitution recognizing that agriculture,
1625 which provides food, energy, health benefits, and security, is the foundation and stabilizing
1626 force of Maryland's economy. To protect this vital sector of Maryland's economy, the right of
1627 farmers to engage in farming practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state. '20

1628 Recognizing that agriculture is an essential industry, we recommend that right-to-farm
1629 laws extend to the ag-supported industry and supply chain. '20

1630 Before entering the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the
1631 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review to settle the nuisance
1632 complaint between the effected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in nuisance
1633 complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '20

1634 Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead
1635 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '20

1636 We support an amendment to the definition of a "commercial fishing or seafood
1637 operation" in the Right to Farm law to include the word "growing." '20

1638 **Funding to Protect Farms**

1639 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1640 environmental suits filed against farmers. '20

1641 **Right to Repair**

1642 We support legislation requiring agricultural equipment manufacturers to make available
1643 the necessary documents, software, and information to allow independent shops and individuals
1644 to repair equipment. '20

1645
1646 **RIPARIAN BUFFERS**

1647 We favor voluntary incentive-based programs for establishing riparian buffers. Grass
1648 species or natural vegetation is preferred. When forest buffers are established provisions
1649 should be made for the future harvest of such trees without penalty. '07

1650 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis. '07

1651 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1652 use. '09

1653
1654 **ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE**

1655 **Road Design**

1656 We suggest the State and County Highway Administration study newly widened as well
1657 as existing roads and correct any dangerous conditions created by landowners placing objects
1658 too close to the roadway. (For example: steel objects, reflectors, ornamental fences, or trees).
1659 '07

1660 We recommend that the State Highway Administration and county roads departments
1661 consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture when designing islands or the placement of
1662 road signs and mailboxes so that they do not prohibit or make difficult the passage of farm
1663 machinery. (For example, signs or mailboxes should not be placed directly opposite each other
1664 on both sides of the road. Staggering signs and mailboxes on either side of a roadway provides
1665 more room for the passage of very large equipment.) We suggest that batteries of mailboxes
1666 be used where possible and placed off the main road in new developments. '08

1667 We urge the State Highway Administration to improve access for farm equipment at the
1668 signalized intersections on Maryland highways. '06

1669 We urge the Department of Transportation to review the use of traffic circles on state
1670 highways to identify problems involved with moving farm equipment around the circles and
1671 through the intersection and to establish guidelines to solve the problems.'09

1672 We believe that land involved in highway interchanges should be properly designed and
1673 landscaped so that it is free of sight obstructions, attractive and easily maintained. We
1674 encourage the state to plant buffers on state property, including state highways on/off ramps
1675 and median strips and maintain them following the same requirements placed on CREP areas.
1676 '05

1677 No curbing should be placed on rural roads with less than 13 feet from the centerline to
1678 the curb.'07

1679 **Road Construction**

1680 An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We
1681 urge that a highway system, including adequate bridges, be built and maintained, to provide for
1682 the movement of goods and produce throughout the state. However, due to the high cost of
1683 highway construction, we recommend, where feasible, that existing roads and bridges be
1684 upgraded and improved instead of building new roads along different routes.'07

1685 We recommend that existing bridges be widened, and new bridges be constructed with
1686 a minimum width of 20 feet, to accommodate safe movement of modern farm equipment. '20

1687 We oppose any additional Chesapeake Bay crossing that is not at the location of the
1688 current Bay Bridge spans. '19

1689 We encourage the State Highway Administration to install painted islands rather than
1690 concrete islands at intersections wherever feasible. '07

1691 We urge that revenues from the highway fuel taxes be used for highway construction
1692 and maintenance only. '11

1693 We believe that the state's share of the overall operation and maintenance cost of the
1694 mass transit systems should be limited to 25%, with 75% coming from the users and the local
1695 jurisdiction served by the system. '14

1696 We urge the counties and state to enforce the law requiring anyone working along our
1697 roads to provide safety devices and personnel to ensure safe travel, as does the State Highway
1698 Department. '07

1699 We encourage the State Highway Administration to proceed with urgently needed road
1700 construction projects. '08

1701 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project
1702 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land
1703 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has
1704 been initiated. '08

1705 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

1706 **Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)**

1707 We urge a change in the law to mandate the trimming of tree limbs on both new growth
1708 and existing trees for safe travel of all vehicles on roadways. '11

1709 We encourage state legislation that requires trees and brush be maintained at a
1710 minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge and to a clearance of 16 feet on the shoulder of all
1711 public roads. Further, we recommend the placement of new poles and guide wires at a
1712 minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge, with reflective material placed thereon. '20

1713 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1714 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and enhance scenic views.'12

1715 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments control invasive species
1716 and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '17

1717 The government should increase the level of maintenance to ensure safe passage of
1718 vehicles.'12

1719 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1720 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of
1721 the tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous and diseased
1722 trees.'12

1723 We highly recommend that State Highway Administration (SHA) send at least a 6-month
1724 notice to adjacent landowners whenever plantings are being proposed along SHA rights-of-way
1725 that are currently in agricultural production. '15

1726 We urge the State Highway Administration to accommodate the movement of farm
1727 equipment into fields in agricultural production when installing right of way projects. '17

1728 We strongly encourage SHA to continue to allow farming on these rights-of-way and
1729 work with farmers to find other suitable sites for plantings on adjacent land. '15

1730 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1731 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the
1732 trimming and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and
1733 simplify the permit process. '10

1734

1735

RURAL COMMUNITIES

1736 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was created
1737 to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13

1738 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
1739 county governments during the legislative session. '13

1740 We strongly support legislation defining rural broadband/internet as a public necessity.
1741 '20

1742

1743

RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM

1744 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
1745 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
1746 Preservation Program.'06

1747 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
1748 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
1749 '07

1750

1751 **SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

1752 **School Standards**

1753 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
1754 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
1755 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all
1756 and should be enforced by the school system. '07

1757 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

1758 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging
1759 in illegal drug activity. '07

1760 **School Lunches & Farm to School Program**

1761 We support the State's Farm-to-School program and recommend funding be increased.
1762 We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote this program and
1763 purchase more locally grown products for school nutrition programs. '17

1764 **School Year**

1765 We oppose a year-round and/or a staggered school year. We encourage all local/county
1766 Boards of Education to develop a calendar that starts after Labor Day and ends no later than
1767 June 15th. '19

1768 **School Attendance Policy**

1769 Participation in agricultural activities (e.g. 4-H, FFA and the Miss County or Miss
1770 Maryland Farm Bureau Programs) should be allowed as an excused absence and should not
1771 count against the number of allowable absences set by the county school system in question.
1772 '05

1773
1774 **SEAT BELTS**

1775 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other
1776 vehicles. '16

1777
1778 **SEED TESTING**

1779 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a
1780 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider. '11

1781 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from any certified seed lab. '14

1782
1783 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

1784 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate the current regulations
1785 concerning septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue
1786 economic hardship on landowners. '06

1787 We support requiring the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) septic systems in
1788 environmentally sensitive areas where significant impact to the Bay can be demonstrated. '11

1789 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

1790 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished
1791 land value incurred by any septic legislation. '11

1792
1793 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1794 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
1795 the federal Class A standard. '07

1796 We oppose any legislation that would allow biosolids utilized on farmland to be less
1797 restrictive than the standards outlined in MDA's 2012 Nutrient Management Guidelines. While

1798 we recognize that biosolids are an excellent source of natural fertilizer, we believe it should be
1799 utilized under the same standards as farm produced natural fertilizer. '12

1800 We recommend that MDA classify dissolved air flotation (DAF) from poultry processing
1801 plant effluent as a biosolid. '19

1802 We support continued research and public education into sludge use to assure proper
1803 application rates and practices that protect farmland. '14

1804 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
1805 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability
1806 and potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be
1807 imported into Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '08

1808 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be
1809 held accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
1810 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge_by a licensed applicator. '08

1811
1812 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a
1813 composite test be taken and recorded each day.'07

1814 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
1815 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'07

1816 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
1817 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '05

1818 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
1819 that are more restrictive than State standards. '09

1820

1821 **STATE DESIGNATIONS**

1822 We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07

1823 We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts
1824 to change this designation. '07

1825

1826 **STATE FFA**

1827 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education to fund a
1828 full-time permanent position through the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF)
1829 to serve FFA youth in Maryland. This position should be field based under the direction of the
1830 College and Career Readiness Division. '15

1831 We recommend that at least one high school in each county and Baltimore City have an
1832 agricultural curriculum program and an FFA program. '15

1833

1834 **STRAY VOLTAGE**

1835 We urge public utilities and their regulatory agencies to use all proven technologies
1836 available to assist in the control of "stray voltage" that can adversely affect humans and
1837 livestock. '07

1838

1839 **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

1840 Maryland agriculture is sustainable and has been for over 300 years. We recognize that
1841 there are seven key factors for a successful sustainable agriculture:

1842 1. It must be profitable for farmers. '08

1843 2. It must work to conserve soil, water, and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08

1844 3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08

- 1845 4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08
1846 5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture.
1847 '08
1848 6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency.
1849 '10
1850 7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic or regenerative farming practices. '19
1851

TAXES

Admission and Amusement Tax

1854 Agritourism activities should be exempt from admission and amusement tax. '19

Capital Gains Tax

1856 We support an exemption from the Maryland capital gains tax on any profit realized
1857 from the sale of a perpetual conservation easement. '15

Estate Tax

1859 We support the elimination of Maryland estate taxes on farmland. '07

1860 We recommend that all owners of farm properties encumbered by agricultural and
1861 conservation easements should be exempt from the estate tax. '12

1862 In determining a Maryland Estate's value for Maryland Estate Tax purposes, the best use
1863 value used for Federal Estate Tax purposes should be replaced with the current agricultural real
1864 estate assessment value for all land used in or for agricultural purposes included in the estate.

1865 '06

1866 We support the position that all property used for agricultural purposes, whether it is
1867 rented to non-family members or not, shall be treated as qualified agricultural property under
1868 the provisions of Maryland estate tax law. '13

Fuel Tax

1870 We support changes in the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) reporting system to
1871 allow semi-annual or annual reporting if the amount owed is below a maximum level. '10

1872 We oppose increasing the state fuel tax. '11

Income Tax

1874 Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal
1875 tax code. '10

Inheritance Tax

1877 First and foremost, we strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '04
1878 Until then, we support taxing nieces and nephews at the previous lineal tax rate on inherited
1879 property. '05

1880 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-
1881 owned agribusinesses. '05

Health Taxes

1883 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '09

Property Tax

1885 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm
1886 or agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '15

1887 We urge amending the Agriculture Use Assessment Law to prescribe a standardized
1888 formula to ensure the full value of this special assessment is not offset by other adjustments in
1889 the total property value of the assessment for farm properties with a homesite. '17

1890 We urge amending the basis for a property tax assessment appeal to include evaluating
1891 the proper application of the agriculture use assessment to the total property value. '17

1892 The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly
1893 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '08

1894 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings including tenant houses. '18

1895 We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings '12

1896 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
1897 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '06

1898 **Sales and Use Taxes**

1899 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
1900 related services from the state sales tax. '11

1901 To clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain Ag purchases, we
1902 recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt
1903 card. '08

1904 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '16

1905 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1906 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
1907 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
1908 operation or structure. '07

1909 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1910 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as
1911 general fund enhancements. '04

1912

1913

TIMBER HARVESTING

1914 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1915 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest
1916 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1917 basis. '07

1918 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state
1919 and county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08

1920 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland. '12

1921 No conservation easement should prohibit timber harvest. '14

1922

1923

TOBACCO

1924 **Master Settlement Agreement**

1925 We recommend that as the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is reviewed by the
1926 General Assembly each year the amount to be secured for the Southern Maryland farmers be at
1927 least kept at a minimum of 5% according to the original settlement agreement. '08

1928 We recommend that if the General Assembly does not secure at least 5% of the Master
1929 Settlement Agreement for Southern Maryland farmers, those farmers who accepted the
1930 conditions of the Tobacco Buyout be relieved of those restrictions in total and be able to
1931 produce tobacco once again for sale on a market basis. '13

1932 **Tobacco Industry**

1933 We urge the state to rescind the restriction on the use of tobacco barns as stated in the
1934 Tobacco Buyout Contract. '06

1935 The State Tobacco Warehouse located in Cheltenham, Maryland was built entirely using
1936 funds derived from tobacco farmers. Therefore, we urge the Maryland Department of
1937 Agriculture to always consider any agricultural use as its top priority and leasing only be
1938 considered as a secondary use. '06

1939 **Tobacco Taxes**

1940 We oppose any increase in taxes on tobacco products. '09

1941

1942

TRESPASSING

1943 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.

1944 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
1945 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
1946 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
1947 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
1948 injury sustained by trespassers. '13

1949 The maximum fine should be raised to \$5,000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
1950 destruction of property. '18

1951 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
1952 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs
1953 or paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission
1954 and to know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private
1955 land. '06

1956 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a
1957 jail term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine if a minor is convicted. The
1958 offender should be required to pay the property owner three times the amount of destruction
1959 including time loss and all court cost. '14

1960 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
1961 by others without written permission of up to \$5,000.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up
1962 to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore,
1963 violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '18

1964 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
1965 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
1966 existing laws and regulations.'07

1967 **Unmanned Aerial Systems**

1968 We request legislation be enacted so that no person, entity, or state agency shall use a
1969 manned aircraft, drone, or unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance or observation under the
1970 doctrine of open fields of any individual, property owned by an individual, farm, or agricultural
1971 industry without the consent of that individual, property owner, farm or agricultural industry.
1972 '13

1973 We support the use of unmanned aerial systems in agricultural businesses provided
1974 written permission is obtained from the property owner. '14

1975

1976

TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES

1977 To achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1978 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion
1979 of this program; '08

1980 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient
1981 runoff into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban
1982 areas, as well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E. deicing
1983 aircraft and parking lots); '08

1984 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific
1985 research, as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately
1986 result in the Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1987 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with
1988 maximum cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the
1989 purchase of equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1990 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay to increase
1991 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '08

1992 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
1993 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08

1994

1995

TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY

Bicycle Safety

1996
1997 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
1998 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '20

1999 We recommend that scheduled bicycle, running or similar recreational events be
2000 conducted in a manner that does not inhibit agricultural activities. '20

2001 All bicycles should be required to have front and rear flashing lights and the rider wear
2002 bright and reflective clothing while riding. '20

Driver Safety Rules

2004 We oppose any legislation to increase the age to obtain a driver's license.'20

Infrastructure Needs

2005
2006 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
2007 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '20

2008 We support the improvements to all Maryland Interstates.'20

Inspections

2009
2010 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
2011 motor vehicles.'20

2012 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis.'20

Safe Movement of Farm Equipment

2014 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of farmers. '20

2015 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the
2016 proper use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend
2017 that a mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to
2018 aid in recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and
2019 roads to improve safety conditions. '20

2020 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow-moving vehicle signs for any
2021 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced.'20

2022 We recommend Maryland State Highway Administration use the digital messaging signs
2023 to warn motorists of agricultural equipment use on highways during spring planting season,
2024 summer small grain harvest and fall grain harvest. '20

2025 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
2026 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
2027 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are
2028 (1) properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped
2029 approached another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the

2030 “other driver” being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her
2031 vehicle. '20

2032 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
2033 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
2034 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '20

2035 **Truck Regulations**

2036 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent
2037 with those of neighboring states. '20

2038 We support the K Tag radius being 25 miles or more. '20

2039 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal, but an axle weight is off, enforcement
2040 personnel should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '20

2041 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products to
2042 25 miles. '20

2043 Farm trucks should be considered “local vehicles” with respect to traffic laws.'20

2044 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
2045 agricultural or commercial traffic on State highways. '20

2046 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
2047 '20

2048 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '20

2049 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
2050 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive
2051 Maintenance Program. '20

2052 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
2053 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should
2054 be established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time
2055 periods to get them repaired. '20

2056 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. '20

2057 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within
2058 each class. '20

2059 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
2060 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
2061 transportation of farm commodities. '20

2062 We support the right of farmers to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers in any
2063 state where it is legal to do so. We further support the right of farmers to employ a title service
2064 agency or agent operating outside of Maryland to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers
2065 in any state where it is legal to do so. '20

2066

2067 **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEMS**

2068 **Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority**

2069 We recommend the University of Maryland systems establish an Ag Producers Board of
2070 Advisors. '11

2071 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
2072 but not at the expense of "traditional crop" courses and research. '08

2073 We urge the University of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional research
2074 as is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support University
2075 of Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education programs.

2076 '04

2077 We recommend the reestablishment of the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to
2078 advise and assist the UMD Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future
2079 structure of UMD Extension. This committee should consist of commodity groups and stake
2080 holders to represent the different geographic regions of the state. '15

2081 We support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and
2082 its tripartite mission of research, teaching, and extension. Because of the many challenges for
2083 Agriculture in the future, which cannot be met without qualified graduates, we support the
2084 need to provide curricula for students who aspire to be the future farmers, agriculture leaders,
2085 ag teachers, extension agents, scientists, and more. '16

2086 We urge the University of Maryland to fill and support the Weed Science position.
2087 Strong emphasis should be centered on the importance of practical herbicide trials and the
2088 dissemination of the results. '18

2089 **Funding**

2090 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
2091 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
2092 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
2093 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
2094 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
2095 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '13

2096 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
2097 for funding the Cooperative Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We
2098 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable
2099 funding support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the
2100 University. We also urge that the leadership for the Institute for Government Service be
2101 restored to the Extension Service. '11

2102 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

2103 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which provides assistance to
2104 farmers for business plan development. '08

2105 **Law School/Litigation**

2106 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
2107 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
2108 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state
2109 clients. Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm
2110 business should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being
2111 accepted by the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should
2112 provide equal representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '13

2113 **Research and Data**

2114 We urge the University of Maryland and the MDA to conduct further research on small
2115 grain crops that will maximize yields while utilizing fertilizers in the best ways for both plant
2116 uptake and environmental benefits. '12

2117 We support a joint effort by the University of Maryland and the MDA to develop and
2118 publish information that thoroughly and accurately describes the role of agriculture in the
2119 state's economy and in protecting and enhancing the state's natural resource base. '07

2120 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
2121 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system. '07

2122 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
2123 varieties of vegetables, fruits and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase
2124 competition with other areas of the country. '08

2125 We urge the University to reinstate the "Field Days" at the research farms. '15

2126 **Teacher Preparation**

2127 We urge the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to
2128 continue to develop and expand the current program that provides an Agricultural Education
2129 major, giving students a specialization in Ag Education leading to a career path as a high school
2130 agricultural educator and/or extension educator. We support allocating new resources to the
2131 program. '16

2132 **Tuition**

2133 We believe that tuition increases at the schools within the University of Maryland
2134 System be limited to the cost-of-living index. '15

2135 **University of Maryland Extension**

2136 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
2137 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
2138 compete in a competitive marketplace. The strength of Extension has always been at the local
2139 level. We recommend that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
2140 Agent/Educator. '14

2141 Area Extension director positions should be eliminated and replaced by previous system
2142 of county extension directors '15

2143 We encourage the University of Maryland Extension to develop a nitrogen test to use in
2144 the fall prior to planting small grains. '08

2145 Due to agriculture's ever-increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
2146 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment
2147 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
2148 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
2149 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11

2150 We strongly recommend that the University of Maryland maintain adequate staffing to
2151 write and certify nutrient management plans and to train individual farmers to write their own
2152 plans. '09

2153 We support maintaining an extension educator for agriculture in each county. '18

2154

2155

WILDLANDS

2156 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
2157 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas
2158 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
2159 management plans. '08

2160

2161

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

2162 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to
2163 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to
2164 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident
2165 Canada geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative
2166 impacts on agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the
2167 Chesapeake Bay. '09

2168 We support the creation of a landowner ombudsman within DNR to focus on wildlife
2169 management on private lands. '17

2170 We urge county and state parkland to have a valid wildlife management plan to control
2171 and properly maintain the wildlife population on this land. '17

2172 **Bird Control**

2173 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any
2174 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and
2175 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

2176 Because they pose a threat to livestock, especially newborn calves, lambs, etc., we urge
2177 removing black headed vultures from the Migratory Birds Treaty Act. '18

2178 **Black Bear**

2179 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western
2180 Maryland to other counties.'07

2181 We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to
2182 control the black bear population in our state. '15

2183 We support the creation of a Bear Management Permit system for the management of
2184 troublesome bears '15

2185 We urge that bear damage permits also be issued during the time when the bears are
2186 damaging crops not just during the bear hunting season, and as a compromise the bear hide is
2187 turned over to DNR. '18

2188 We urge that the Bear season damage permit apply to the farm where the damage
2189 occurs and contiguous properties, with the landowner's permission. '17

2190 We support changes to the bear hunt which will grant landowners more equitable
2191 access to the hunt. '15

2192 We support the hunting of bear by all agricultural producers and their immediate family
2193 on property they own during the regular bear season without going through the lottery. '17

2194 **Coyote**

2195 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

2196 **Feral Hogs**

2197 Feral hogs should be regulated as a "varmint" species. '15

2198 **Deer**

2199 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of
2200 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '17

2201 We urge DNR to lower the ratio of deer per square mile. '18

2202 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
2203 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
2204 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '17

2205 (1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '17

2206 (2) List Sika deer as an invasive species due to extreme crop damage. '17

2207 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
2208 seasons. '17

2209 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd
2210 population count. '17

2211 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
2212 areas. '17

2213 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
2214 herd. '17

- 2215 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '17
- 2216 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent
- 2217 to agricultural lands. '17
- 2218 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and
- 2219 processing harvested deer. '17
- 2220 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
- 2221 management. '17
- 2222 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
- 2223 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of
- 2224 deer population. '17
- 2225 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '17
- 2226 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
- 2227 tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17
- 2228 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a
- 2229 plan to manage and control wildlife populations. '17
- 2230 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an
- 2231 increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17
- 2232 **Deer Crop Damage**
- 2233 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate
- 2234 enactment:
- 2235 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17
- 2236 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17
- 2237 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop
- 2238 within the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17
- 2239 (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17
- 2240 (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17
- 2241 (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
- 2242 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
- 2243 (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
- 2244 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
- 2245 disposing properly should be eliminated. '17
- 2246 (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to always use the weapon of
- 2247 choice for filling Deer Management permits. '17
- 2248 (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
- 2249 (10) The commercial sale of venison from certified processing facilities. '17
- 2250 (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
- 2251 (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the
- 2252 authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated
- 2253 as such. '17
- 2254 (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be
- 2255 deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17
- 2256 (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation
- 2257 non-profit under a crop damage permit. '17
- 2258 (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to construct
- 2259 wildlife fence around agriculture fields to help deter crop damage. '18

2260 **Fox Chasing**

2261 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from
2262 landowners to conduct the hunt. '08

2263 **Furbearers**

2264 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

2265 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase
2266 a stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any
2267 fee. '08

2268 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

2269 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
2270 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture
2271 of fur-bearing wildlife. '10

2272 We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

2273 We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species similar to groundhogs if
2274 they are causing property damage. '17

2275 **Hunting Ethics and Liability**

2276 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
2277 taking place. '07

2278 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
2279 manner similar to motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record
2280 after an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

2281 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
2282 the maximum extent possible. '06

2283 Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by
2284 hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting
2285 activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in
2286 safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established
2287 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

2288 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

2289 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
2290 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
2291 regulations. '17

2292 We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the
2293 purpose of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18

2294 We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands. '17

2295 We support season-long Sunday hunting for the first 3 hours after sunrise in counties
2296 where Sunday hunting does not already exist. '17

2297 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
2298 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
2299 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
2300 during that season. '17

2301 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17

2302 We support extending the deer hunting season through February. '17

2303 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17

2304 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17

2305 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17

2306 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
2307 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren, and employees when hunting only on that
2308 property. We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and
2309 his/her spouse, children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural
2310 purposes (or a sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this
2311 farmland. We are opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license
2312 exemption to persons (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under
2313 the age of 16. '17

2314 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
2315 hunting or trapping privileges. '17

2316 **Waterfowl**

2317 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2318 Service to take all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow goose
2319 population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

2320 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
2321 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

2322 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
2323 throughout, starting about November 5th. '09

2324 We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on
2325 or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level
2326 consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14

2327 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
2328 increase in bag limits. '08

2329 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09

2330 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:

2331 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08

2332 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09

2333 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of
2334 property lines. '08

2335 We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows
2336 or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area to be charged with baiting. '14

2337 **Waterfowl Crop Damage**

2338 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08

2339 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e. recorders or baiters) to
2340 reduce the snow goose population. '08

2341

2342 **YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

2343 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland
2344 through:

2345 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '20

2346 (2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '20

2347 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation
2348 easements; '20

2349 (4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07

2350 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them. '20

2351 (6) Support and greater promotion of programs. '20

2352 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture
2353 to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '20