



### #3: February 5, 2021

#### ***Dates to Remember:***

#### **Maryland Farm Bureau Virtual Day in Annapolis | Monday, February 15**

Maryland Farm Bureau Members Only!

7:30 AM – Welcome

7:40 AM – Overview of Bills, Colby Ferguson

8:30 AM – Connecting with your Legislator, Mac Middleton

**REGISTER**

Welcome to our third Hotline of the 2021 Maryland General Assembly session. This week in Annapolis has continued to be hectic due to bill introduction deadlines in both the House and the Senate. Maryland Farm Bureau testified on several bills including the food donation tax credit extension, net metering, environmental rights and the Glyphosate ban. Bill hearings will start to increase over the next few weeks as both chambers will work to meet the bill crossover deadline of March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Stay in touch, follow important bills and contact your legislator by going to our [action center](#) and selecting key legislation.

The following bills will be heard next week:

### **Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

**HB 507**: Clean Water Commerce Act of 2021

*Delegate Stein, E&T at 1:30 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill addresses the sunset of the pilot program and establishes the Clean Water Commerce Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund. It requires the Department of the

Environment to transfer \$20,000,000 from the Bay Restoration Fund to the Clean Water Commerce Fund beginning in fiscal year 2022. The bill alters the authorized uses of the Bay Restoration Fund and repeals the authorization to use funds in the Bay Restoration Fund for costs associated with nutrient or sediment load reductions.

Maryland Farm Bureau was involved in the workgroup to review and amend this bill over the last two months. We will be supporting the sponsor amendments being offered.

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 507**

---

**HB 594:** Prohibition on Sale of Wildlife - Local Venison Donation Programs - Application  
*Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo, E&T at 1:30 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill establishes that the prohibition against selling, offering for sale, bartering, or exchanging deer taken from the wild does not apply to venison from a lawfully-harvested white-tailed deer that is donated to a venison donation program, administered by the county in which the deer was harvested, for processing and distribution to a food bank.

Deer cause on average \$50/acre of crop damage to Maryland crops. The farmer receives no repayment for this economic loss. A farmer is allowed to harvest deer under a deer management permit, but has to foot the cost to have the deer processed and is required to either keep the meat to donate it to a food bank. This bill does two things. It allows a farmer or hunter that ability to re-coop the cost of harvesting and processing a deer that they donate to a food bank. Secondly, it helps provide a high quality, lean protein source for food banks around the state.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: The following action will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate enactment; the commercial sale of venison from certified processing facilities and a state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation non-profit under a crop damage permit.

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 594**

---

**SB 203:** Aquaculture Lease Applications - Notices, Protests, Meetings, and Conflict Resolution  
*Senator Bailey, EHEA at 1:00 PM in 2 West Miller*

This bill extends the riparian land owners that have standing on a Aquaculture lease application from land directly in front of the proposed lease to land that is within 500 feet from the edge of a proposed lease.

It also requires DNR to work with the landowners that have an issue with the proposed lease and the lease applicant to mitigate the concerns raised in the petition and consider conflict resolution between the shoreline property owners and lease applicants before issuing they can issue the lease permit. Lastly, the bill further defines when DNR is required to hold a public hearing on a lease application. It adds: if the department

determines that the person is raising a significant public health, safety, or welfare concern.

Maryland Farm Bureau Policy: We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal production practices.

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES SB 203**

---

**SB 318:** Natural Resources - Fishing and Hunting Rights

*Senator Bailey & Simonaire, EHEA at 1:00 PM in 2 West Miller*

This bill simply establishes a Right-to-Fish & Hunt in Maryland as long as the person is following the regulations and restrictions outlined in state law.

Maryland Farm Bureau supports the right to hunt and fish in Maryland. Hopefully this bill will assist with ensuring hunting and fishing remain available throughout the state.

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 318**

**Thursday, February 11, 2021**

**HB 752:** Income Tax Credit - Food Donation Pilot Program - Extension

*Delegate Ebersole, W&M at 1:30 PM in 130 HOB*

This bill simply extends the Food Donation Pilot Program Income Tax Credit for two additional years from December 31, 2021 to December 31, 2023.

The pilot program tax credit was enacted in 2016. Program allows a credit of up to \$5,000 against the State income tax; providing that the credit is equal to 50% of the value of the fresh farm products for human consumption (Eligible Food) donation or 75% of the value of donated certified organic produce. Each week, the Secretary of Ag shall establish and publish the categories and value of certified organic produce and eligible food donations. The Secretary of Ag, in consultation with the Comptroller, shall establish a process to certify a person or an organization to act as a tax credit certificate administrator. The total amount of tax credit certificates issued under this program may not exceed \$100,000 for a calendar year.

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 752**

---

**SB 486:** Labor and Employment - Employment Standards During an Emergency  
(Maryland Essential Workers' Protection Act)  
*Senator Augustine, FIN at 1:00 PM in 3 East Miller*

This bill would require an essential employer to give a written statement regarding hazard pay paid to their essential workers for each pay period; require an essential employer to take actions related to occupational safety and health during an emergency; authorize an essential worker to refuse to fulfill a work responsibilities if the working conditions don't meet the requirements in this bill; prohibits an essential employer from retaliating or taking other adverse action against an essential worker or other worker if they refuse to work;

This bill would put in state law, requirements over and above the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the US Department of Labor. These restrictions would be almost impossible for a farm to adhere to and would most likely put them out of business. The retroactive hazard pay would cost every farmer and farm business nearly \$5,000 per employee to cover the days in 2020 that there has been a state of emergency due to the COVID Pandemic. In addition, MD Department of Labor doesn't have the manpower to inspect these operations in time to meet the limited timelines farmers have to apply for and receive H-2A visa workers. H-2A housing is already inspected annually. Production agriculture is a time sensitive business that can't shut down for a few days or weeks. This bill would be devastating to the ag community.

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES SB 486**

---

Maryland Farm Bureau members are urged to contact their legislators and members of the relevant committees in support of Farm Bureau's positions on the bills listed above. To contact legislators and follow important bills, visit Maryland Farm Bureau's [action center](#) and select key legislation.

### **Committees & Room Numbers:**

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

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

## **In Other Ag News**



### **A Time for Policy Over Politics--No Need to Override Hogan's Veto on SB300**

The Maryland State legislature convened in January for an unprecedented, largely virtual, legislative session. COVID-19 and other important issues from the trying year that was 2020 have given the legislature plenty of priorities to focus on and overcome

during the 2021 session. Given the limited time for legislators on the floor and priority issues to advance during a global pandemic; one would assume the Senate would not spend precious legislative time overriding a Gubernatorial veto on a bill for which the provisions have already been enacted through regulation. [More here.](#)

---



### **2020 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey**

Do you want to know how well the local food market is doing in your state? We do and so do many others in your community. Please respond online to your 2020 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey, or complete and mail back your questionnaire, by Feb. 16. Results will be available this November. [More here.](#)

---

### **Conservation Buffer Sign-up Ends February 5**

Sign-up for the Maryland Department of Agriculture's (MDA's) Conservation Buffer Initiative ends February 5. Farmers are encouraged to take advantage of this special opportunity to apply for attractive grants to plant streamside buffers on farms to improve water quality. The program offers many unique features including a buffer option for field ditches, flexible site management, and shorter contract terms. Applications are available on the [website](#).

---

### **Nutrient Management Reports Due by March 1**

MDA reminds farmers that March 1 is the deadline to submit their Annual Implementation Reports summarizing nutrient applications made during calendar year 2020. This year, farmers have the option to submit their reports online through the [Maryland One-Stop](#) portal. For farmers who want to continue to submit paper reports, a mail-in option is still available. For more information, visit the department's [website](#) or call (410) 841-5959.

---

### **Statewide Survey of MD Career and Technical Education (CTE) Industry Credentials of Value**

The Maryland State Department of Education Division of Career and College Readiness, Maryland Business Roundtable for Education and Governor's Workforce Development Board are collaborating to conduct a comprehensive review of industry credentials that high school and postsecondary students can earn in CTE programs of study offered throughout the state. The survey identifies current industry credentials that students can earn and requests that you either confirm that the credentials are of value or recommend alternative credentials. **Your input on this survey, as a Maryland employer, is**

**critical** to ensuring that Maryland students earn industry credentials that will fill Maryland's current and future workforce pipeline. [More here.](#)

---

### **Funding Available to Protect Maryland Wetland and Family Farms**

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Maryland is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Conservation Easements Program (ACEP). The 2018 Farm Bill has provided NRCS with technical and financial assistance to help private landowners, land trusts, state and local governments, and other groups protect valuable lands. ACEP applications may be submitted at any time to NRCS; however, applications for the current funding round must be submitted on or before March 5, 2021. Applications are available at your local [USDA Service Center](#) and at [www.md.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.md.nrcs.usda.gov).

---

### **Five MFB Scholarships Available**

Maryland Farm Bureau is giving away \$10,000 in scholarships to students. Applications are due March 15, 2020. [Apply today!](#)

---

### **Budget & Avis: Treat Your Valentine**

Treat your Valentine to a sweet ride this February! Rent an Avis or Budget rental car and save up to 30% with your Farm Bureau membership. Learn more, by visiting [here](#) or book your reservation now by calling 1-800-527-0700. #FBPays



**Nationwide**<sup>®</sup>

Protect your **farm,**  
**family and future**

[Learn more](#)