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#### **#4: February 12, 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 Maryland Farm Bureau's Hotline #4. This week we saw the final bills introduced in both the House and Senate that are guaranteed a bill hearing. The Senate ended up with 926 bills and the House introduced 1331 bills by the deadline. During the week, we testified on several bills including the Clean Water Commerce Act, Local Venison Donation Program, and the Essential Workers Protection Act. Some good news, the Hemp restriction bill was withdrawn by the House sponsor and the Governor's veto of SB 300 – Chlorpyrifos Ban from last year was upheld by the Senate. Bill hearings will steadily increase over the next few weeks as committees will work to get all the hearings done with plenty of time for both chambers to get bills passed before the bill crossover deadline of March 22nd. Monday morning will be our Virtual Day in Annapolis priority bill briefing. Farm Bureau members can register by clicking the register link above.

The following bills will be heard next week:

**Tuesday, February 16, 2021**

**SB 508:** Public Utilities - Net Energy Metering  
*Senator Peters, FIN at 1:00 PM in 3 East Miller*

This bill increases the maximum generation capacity of an electric generating system used by an eligible customer-generator for net metering to 5 megawatts. It also prohibits the Public Service Commission from prohibiting the construction or operation of multiple net metered solar generating facilities located on contiguous lots that are owned by a local government solely because the capacity of the combined net metering systems exceeds the 5 megawatt limit.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Policy: We oppose any additional increases to the solar carve out in the RPS unless projects are two megawatts or smaller.

### **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES SB 508**

**Wednesday, February 17, 2021**

**HB 800:** Aquaculture Leases - Marking and Recording Requirements - Mobile Application  
*Delegate Clark, E&T at 1:30 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill requires that DNR develop a mobile app. authorizes DNR to use a third party to develop the mobile app. The purpose of the mobile application is to aid an individual who is on the waters of the state in determining the individual's location, in real time, relative to: aquaculture enterprise zones; aquaculture leases; demonstration leases; fixed fishing devices; natural clam or oyster bars; oyster sanctuaries; public shellfish fishery areas; sav protection zones; Yates bars; or any other data that the department deems relevant.

With so many issues of people not knowing that they are in areas that aren't open for fishing/harvesting, this mobile app will address that excuse and assist those on the water in making the right decision when trying to decide where to fish.

### **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 800**

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**HB 831:** Maryland Food System Resiliency Council  
*Delegate Charkoudian, E&T at 1:30 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill establishes the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council. The council is to address the food insecurity crisis in the State due to the pandemic, develop recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system, and develop by November 1, 2021, a plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food. MDFB Executive Director or designee is listed as one of the 26 council members.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Policy:

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

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 831**

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**HB 860:** State Planning – Preservation of Agricultural Land – Goal  
*Delegate Gilchrist, E&T at 1:30 PM in 250 HOB*

This bill simply extends and codifies an unwritten State goal of preserving a total of 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land to 2030 through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, the Maryland GreenPrint Program, the Rural Legacy Program, the Maryland Environmental Trust, and local land preservation programs. The previous goal was to expire in 2022. This bill doesn't include MARBIDCO's Next Generation Ag Land Acquisition Program. We will be asking for a simple amendment to include the Next Gen program.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Policy: We urge full funding by the state and counties for agland preservation programs, including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program. Payments for these programs should reflect current market values for farmland.

Furthermore, we urge the state and county governments to continue to support the voluntary preservation of agricultural land with substantial increases in funding. We encourage them to work with all interested stakeholders to develop innovative voluntary programs that maximize farmland preservation while protecting landowner equity and private property rights and not negatively impacting any other rights running with the land.

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 860 WITH AMENDMENTS**

**Thursday, February 18, 2021**

**HB 33:** Climate Crisis and Education Act  
*Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo, ECM at 1:30 PM in 230 HOB*

This bill establishes a Climate Crisis Initiative in the Department of the Environment for to establish a greenhouse gas reduction target of 60% from 2006 levels by 2030 and net-zero by 2045; establishes a Climate Crisis Council to develop a plan to reach the reduction targets and submit it to the General Assembly by December 31, 2022; requires a

greenhouse gas pollution fee on all fossil fuels brought into the State for combustion in the State with \$340 million of those fees to be used to pay for the Kirwan education recommendations.

This bill goes over and above what the Maryland Commission on Climate Change is recommending. The negative economic impacts to Maryland citizens will be substantial. To make matters worse, the fees that would be collect through the proposed fuel tax wouldn't be used to cover the cost of transitioning to zero emission vehicles, but instead to pay for new Pre-K through 12 education program that has nothing to do with Climate Change.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Policy: We oppose the creation of a state carbon and/or Greenhouse Gas reduction tax/fee.

### **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU OPPOSES HB 33**

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**HB 682:** Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Thermal Biomass Systems  
*Delegate Buckel, ECM at 1:30 PM in 230 HOB*

This bill authorizes thermal biomass systems, for purposes of the State's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS), to use food waste, qualifying biomass, or animal manure as a source of fuel, regardless of the relative mix of those fuel sources. Other eligibility requirements related to thermal biomass systems and their fuel components are unchanged. Maryland Farm Bureau supports the clarifying amendments being offered by the Maryland Forests Association to include Silvicultural products and natural wood waste.

Maryland Farm Bureau's Policy: We support energy generation from all agricultural residues and biproducts to be considered value-added production on a farm. We support initiatives to generate heat & electricity from timber resources.

### **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 682 WITH AMENDMENTS**

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**SB 502:** Labor and Employment - Maryland Wage and Hour Law - Agricultural Stands, Retail Farms, and Farmers' Markets  
*Senator Carozza, FIN at 1:00 PM in 3 East Miller*

This bill establishes an exemption from the Maryland Wage and Hour Law for an individual employed at an agricultural stand, a retail farm, or a farmers' market that primarily sells agricultural products that the farmer has produced. If passed, the minimum wage would be \$10.10/hour.

Most of the employees that fill these seasonal farm market jobs are youth between 16 and 18 years old. In most cases, this is their first job. The cost of labor is a major issue with farm profitability especially when the farmer retains ownership in their crop and looks

to retail it to the consumer. Even at a retail price, margins are very small. Increasing the minimum wage 33% prevents a farmer from offering youth opportunities to have their first job at their operation. This bill would allow the farmer to offer those beginning jobs without a massive increase in labor costs.

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

## MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 502

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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

### **American Farm Bureau Advocacy: Ready for 2021**

Despite all the challenges that we faced in 2020 you were not deterred from making your voice heard in your community and in Washington. Last year, we contacted you on multiple occasions – from writing e-mails to your legislators, to reading our presidential candidate policy survey, to getting registered to vote – and you stepped up! Almost 6,900 members used our iFarm iVote platform to confirm their balloting information or register to vote. Federal officials in Washington heard from Farm Bureau members over 27,000 times on issues critical to the success of agriculture and rural communities.

That effort does not stop in 2021. The Biden Administration is staffing up and the new 117th Congress is off and running. As we continue to face the challenges of COVID-19 and the economy, AFBF staff will be working hard to have a seat at the table with the Administration and Congress to advocate for policies that will help farmers and ranchers. Learn more about AFBF's issues [here](#).

This cannot be done without you. Our policy successes will be dependent on you to send messages and build relationships with your federal officials to ensure that the voice of agriculture and rural communities is always heard. Thank you for all that you do for your communities and our country.

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### **\$10 Million in Conservation Assistance Now Available for Maryland Farmers**

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) today announced that \$10 million in conservation assistance is now available to help livestock farmers in northern Maryland counties install best management practices on their farms to improve manure management and protect water quality in streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. Counties eligible for assistance include Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, and Washington. The application period is open now through March 19. Conservation practices funded by this agreement include a range of stream protection practices and barnyard management practices that have been shown to improve water quality. [More here.](#)

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### **Maryland Farm Bureau and Nationwide Present: SILO The Film**

Maryland Farm Bureau and Nationwide are sponsoring a free Digital Community screening of the film "SILO". SILO is the first ever feature film about a grain bin entrapment. Inspired by true events, SILO follows a harrowing day in an American farm town. Disaster strikes when teenager Cody Rose is entrapped in a 50-foot-tall grain bin. The digital screening is on February 24, 2021 from 7-8:30 PM. If you have previously registered for the winter/spring webinar series, you will be automatically registered for this screening. [Register here.](#)



### **NASS Agricultural Surveys**

The past 11 months have brought into sharper focus why agricultural data are so important. When agricultural stakeholders, local and federal decision-makers, and other data users evaluate how the COVID-19 pandemic affected our farmers and the agricultural industry, they will continue to look to NASS data for their analyses. It remains critical that producers respond to NASS surveys so that all data are included and represent an accurate picture of local and national agriculture. [More here.](#)

For the latest NASS survey information, visit [nass.usda.gov](http://nass.usda.gov) and stay connected with us on Twitter [@usda\\_nass](https://twitter.com/usda_nass). For questions or assistance with a survey, contact Shareefah Williams, Maryland State Statistician via email at [Shareefah.Williams@usda.gov](mailto:Shareefah.Williams@usda.gov) or call at 301-347-8179.

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### **U.S., China Phase One Agreement – Year One**

2020 will be remembered by all, for a host of reasons. For those in the ag world, the Phase One Agreement between the United States and China will certainly be one of them. Signed on January 15, 2020, and in effect as of February 14, 2020, the agreement set lofty goals for U.S. agricultural exports to China. Now that all the data for calendar year 2020 is available, it's time to see what went right and what did not. [More here.](#)

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### John Deere: Precision Ag Technology



A farmer's business is a network of fields, each with millions of seeds, and to reach maximum potential, farmers must precisely manage each as they grow. To do that, a farmer needs to make hundreds of decisions every day in a growing season, many before that seed ever touches the soil. Creating predictability out of immense variability is the key. The combination of smart technology and data-driven insights is critical to feeding a growing global population and promoting sustainable farming practices. Learn more about new John Deere technology that your Farm Bureau discount can help you buy: <https://bit.ly/36fxvHC>

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**family and future**

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