



Maryland Farm Bureau

2022 Policy Book

***As Adopted by the Delegates at the 2021 Annual Meeting
December 7, 2021***

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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 2022 as set by voting delegates during the 106th annual convention of the
16 Maryland Farm Bureau on December 7, 2021.

17 **AGRICULTURE EDUCATION**

18 **Career Technology Education**

19 We support the career technology education program in Maryland. We recommend
20 that local boards of education, with state support, expand Maryland State Department of
21 Education (MSDE) approved agriculture education programs in middle schools and high schools.
22 We strongly recommend that the State board of education institute a more comprehensive
23 agriculture education program. '21

24 We highly recommend MDFB have representation on boards and omissions at the
25 Maryland State Department of Education, and the Department of Labor especially in Career &
26 Technology Education. '21

27 **Colleges & Universities**

28 We urge the introduction or expansion of agricultural programs in colleges and
29 universities throughout the state. '21

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

32 **Curriculum**

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

38 We urge the public and private schools to implement a MSDE approved agricultural
39 education program that is available to all students. '21

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

42 We commend the Maryland Commission on Education in Agriculture for its study and
43 report concerning the enhancement of agricultural education in the state. We support the
44 Commission's recommendations to improve and enhance education in agricultural programs
45 throughout Maryland, especially the improved agricultural curriculum in Grades Pre-K-12 and
46 the recommendations for new and upgraded facilities. We encourage the continued efforts of
47
48

49 the Governor to expand and improve agricultural curriculum in the Maryland public school
50 system. '20

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

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

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

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

61 **Environmental & Agricultural Literacy Requirements**

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

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

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

71 We recommend that curriculum for environmental & agricultural literacy as a
72 requirement for graduation be reviewed by MAEF. '21

73 **Funding for MAEF & Ag Education**

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

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

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

80 We oppose increasing the number of commemorative license plates beyond the
81 Maryland Ag Tag and Chesapeake Bay Tag. '21

82 **Teacher Training**

83 We recommend that training of teachers for Maryland public and private K-12 schools
84 and colleges include a mini-course in agriculture, and that state educational subdivisions
85 include an in-service day or days to instruct teachers and guidance counselors about agriculture
86 and careers in agriculture. '21

87 **State FFA**

88 Maryland Farm Bureau recommends to the State Department of Education to fully fund
89 staffing for Maryland FFA administration through the Maryland Agricultural Education
90 Foundation (MAEF) to serve FFA youth in Maryland. This position should be field based under
91 the direction of the College and Career Readiness Division. '21

92 We recommend expanding MSDE approved agriculture education programs and FFA
93 into middle schools. '21

94 We support the State of Maryland becoming an FFA affiliated State. '21

95 **Legislature Education**

96 We support and encourage Maryland State legislators to learn more about Maryland
97 agriculture through building relationships with Maryland farmers and encourage more farm
98 visits. '20

99

100

AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

101 We support an increase in funds to the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board (MAFB) to be
102 used to promote and assist agricultural fairs, 4-H exhibits, FFA and other qualifying agricultural
103 events. '21

104 We oppose restrictions or bans on the types of animals that are shown at state, county,
105 and community agricultural fairs, shows and exhibitions. '21

106

107

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

108 We support the concept of agricultural land preservation and urge all landowners to
109 acquaint themselves with the programs available and the benefits derived thereof.
110 Furthermore, we urge the state and county governments to continue to support the voluntary
111 preservation of agricultural land with substantial increases in funding. We encourage them to
112 work with all interested stakeholders to develop innovative voluntary programs that maximize
113 farmland preservation while protecting landowner equity and private property rights and not
114 negatively impacting any other rights running with the land. '21

115 We strongly urge MALPF continue to be under the control and oversight of the Maryland
116 Secretary of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. '21

117 We oppose taking productive agricultural land out of production for the purpose of
118 meeting requirements for forest conservation, buffers, and mitigation measures. The state
119 should conduct a survey to determine the loss of acreage of food producing land for these
120 purposes. '21

121 We encourage neighboring counties to work cooperatively to achieve agland
122 preservation goals provided county sovereignty is respected and all planning and zoning
123 decisions are made at the county level. '21

124 We support the Maryland Ag Land Preservation Foundation and county preservation
125 boards in their efforts to preserve agricultural land throughout the state. Furthermore, we urge
126 that these boards maintain the right to select land eligible for easement sale with priority
127 toward creating large contiguous blocks of preserved land. '21

128 The decision to target priority farms should be left to the county's agriculture land
129 preservation board under the current MALPF funding formula. '21

130 We support the right for farms currently enrolled in ag land preservation programs to be
131 competitive with other farms and allowed to offer innovative agritourism options. '21

132 We support sustainable forest management on preserved agricultural land. '21

133 **Ag Preservation Funding**

134 We urge full funding by the state and counties for agriculture land preservation
135 programs, including but not limited to MALPF, Rural Legacy and Critical Farms Program.
136 Payments for these programs should reflect current market values for farmland. '21

137 Farming and Silviculture that generates a profit should be an allowed use on agricultural
138 land purchased by the state, county, or municipalities. '21

139 We support an Installment Purchase Program option. '21

140 We support permanent annual funding of MARBIDCO's Next Generation Farmland
141 Acquisition Program. '21

142 We oppose transfer and/or use of funds set aside for agricultural land preservation for
143 anything other than the preservation of farmland. '21

144 We oppose any attempt to cap all transfer tax funds used for agricultural land
145 preservation programs. '21

146 We support a line on state income tax returns to allow taxpayers to donate funds to the
147 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to preserve farmland. '21

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. '21

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. '21

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. '21

165 **Maryland Agricultural Land 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) We direct MALPF to allow other forms of income when it does not interfere with the
171 present agriculture operation or change the agricultural capabilities of the land including
172 expanded permitted uses such as ag tourism and value-added operations. '21
- 173 (2) We support the right of value-added agricultural businesses on MALPF land to sell products
174 not produced or grown on the farm as a secondary attraction (e.g. sandwiches, t-shirts,
175 small gifts). '21
- 176 (3) We recommend that farms be allowed into the MALPF program without regard to mineral
177 rights issues. '21
- 178 (4) We strongly urge MALPF to permit the onsite extraction of gas from farmland under MALPF
179 easement '21

180 **Other Methods to Preserve Agriculture Land**

181 As another step toward preservation of agricultural land, we propose legislation to
182 create an Agricultural Land Condemnation Board, chaired by the State's Secretary of
183 Agriculture. Before anyone can condemn any productive agricultural lands for any purpose, the
184 involved body must appeal to the board. The board must determine that there is no
185 reasonable or prudent alternative. '21

186 We oppose the condemnation of prime and productive farmland for government
187 mandated mitigation projects without prior approval by the Agriculture Land Condemnation
188 Board. '21

189 **Transfer Development Rights**

190 We oppose the conveyance of Transferable Development Rights across county lines. '21

191 **Zoning**

192 We recommend that every county review their agricultural zoning and its impact on the
193 equity of landowners. '21

194 We support the preservation of agricultural land and equity through the process of
195 donating, purchasing, and transferring development rights. However, state mandated down-
196 zoning is totally unacceptable. We support local zoning authority only. '21

197 We recommend that state required land use planning documents for Parks & Recreation
198 and Ag Preservation be prepared separately. '21

199 We recommend when any land is enrolled for ag preservation, the land be downzoned
200 to agriculture zoning. '21

201

202

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

229 We support agritainment as an acceptable use of agricultural land. '13

230 Agritourism should be defined as activities conducted on a farm and offered to the
231 public or to invited groups for the purpose of education, recreation, or active involvement in
232 the farm operation. '14

233 We support wedding and event venues as an accessory use on a working farm '16

234 We support incidental outdoor stays as an accessory use on a working farm.

235 Regulations and approvals should be addressed on a county-by-county basis. '21

236 We encourage landowners to clearly define property boundaries for Agritourism
237 activities. '21
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
273

AIR QUALITY

275 Although the Maryland Department of the Environment is charged with promulgation of
276 air quality standards, we encourage MDE to consult with the Department of Agriculture when
277 considering regulations that impact the agricultural community. '18
278 We ask that the Maryland Department of the Environment when formulating its clean
279 air (state) implementation plan, consider agriculture's inability to pass on costs incurred in
280 reducing equipment emissions, dust, or odors associated with normal farming practices. '18

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

301

302

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

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

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

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

309 We recognize the use of all-terrain vehicles as necessary agricultural vehicles in the day-
310 to-day business of agricultural operations. We support a farmer's ability to cross and travel
311 state and county roads to get from one part of his/her farm to another. '21

312

313

ALCOHOL PRODUCTION – ON FARM

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

316 We support the definition of winery to include vineyards, processing of grapes and other
317 fruit, wine making, storage of wine, promotional events, tasting rooms, sales of wine and
318 related products, food service, and other associated activities. '21

319 We support the definition of farm brewery to include agricultural products used for
320 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 **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 **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

417

418 **BEEKEEPING**

419 Managed bee populations have been dwindling as the result of mite infestations,
420 weather conditions and other unknown factors. Funding should be provided and enhanced for

421 additional research and staffing to assist beekeepers and others in overcoming these
422 challenges, to ensure adequate managed bee populations in the future. '11
423 There should be no laws or regulations that prevent or discourage the keeping of
424 honeybees and other pollinators in an area unless it is determined that the beekeeper is not
425 using best management practices. '08
426 We support the planting of pollinator habitat as long as the habitat is not a noxious or
427 invasive species of plants '15

428 429 **BROWNFIELDS**

430 We support incentives and liability protections to encourage new enterprises to utilize
431 former industrial sites as a means of reducing sprawl. '07
432 We support incentives to encourage the redevelopment of former residential and
433 commercial properties as a means of reducing sprawl. '03

434 435 **CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEANUP**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

459 We recommend that cost share programs be evaluated and revised as necessary to
460 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 We support new dedicated federal funding for the Conowingo Watershed
512 Implementation Plan (WIP). '21

513

514 **COMMODITY PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

515 **Farmers' Markets**

516 We strongly encourage the continuance of all farmers' markets. '21

517 We support legislation that will promote farmers' markets by creating a central registry
518 of Maryland farmers' markets, to include roadside stands, agricultural product sales locations,
519 or other locations that advertise, promote, or use the term "farmers' market." '21

520 We encourage legislation that will limit legal liability to registered farmers' market
521 operators. '21

522 We oppose the use of title "Farmers' Market" for a store that is not truly a Farmers'
523 Market. We urge Maryland to adopt a law like the one invoked in Maine to define how and
524 when the term Farmers' Market may be used. '21

525 **Labeling Requirements**

526 We strongly support truth in labeling of food and food products. '21

527 **MDA & State Government Marketing Efforts**

528 Efficient marketing programs are necessary for any successful agricultural enterprise.
529 We urge the Governor and legislators to support the Maryland Department of Agriculture's
530 efforts to improve marketing services. We support the "Maryland's Best" marketing program.
531 **'21**

532 We urge the Maryland legislature to adequately fund MDA marketing programs that
533 serve all citizens. '21

534 We strongly encourage the Maryland Department of Commerce to continue its policy of
535 providing financial support for the promotion of our agricultural industries. '21

536 We support substantially increased efforts by the government to expand the number of
537 markets and buyers for Maryland agricultural commodities. '21

538 We support state grants and financial support for local co-ops, marketing, and food
539 processing facilities. '21

540 **Deep Water Terminal**

541 We support a viable grain export terminal. '21

542 The State of Maryland must work diligently to develop a competitive grain trade deep
543 water terminal, which is critical for the survival of grain producers. '21

544 **Roadside Markets**

545 We oppose legislation that attempts to prohibit roadside vending of our agricultural
546 products. '21

547 We encourage the enforcement of existing county zoning laws related to farmers'
548 markets and roadside markets to prevent the proliferation of unlicensed, non-farmer
549 merchants and/or non-local merchants. '21

550 **Roadside Signs**

551 Due to the need for the farmers to diversify their operations the use of roadside signs is
552 imperative to let the public know your location and which products are available. Therefore,
553 we support exempting such signs from the regulations governing roadside signs. '21

554 **Traditional and Organic Agricultural Products**

555 We oppose any segment of the farm community promoting their production methods as
556 healthier or better for the environment without evidence to support those claims. '21

557 **Value Added**

558 We support the development of a statewide value-added processing system. '21
559

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Best Management Practices

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

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

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

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

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

Conservation Practices

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

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

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

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

Our proposed changes include the following:

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

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

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

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

634

COST SHARE FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

Cover Crop Program

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

- 639 (1) It should be made permanent. '07
- 640 (2) The per acre cost share rate should reflect current costs '10
- 641 (3) All cover crop acreage should be fully funded. '17
- 642 (4) Fall applied poultry and livestock manure that is produced by that farming operation and is
643 consistent with the farm's nutrient management plan should not reduce the cost share rate. '07
- 644 (5) Farmers should receive the same cover crop payment for manure incorporated land that
645 they would be paid for no till land, due to new manure incorporation requirements. '13
- 646 (6) MDA's annual calculation of cover crop acreage planted should include all fall cash grain
647 crops and hay acreage. '07
- 648 (7) Counties declared disaster areas should be eligible for emergency cover crop funding. '07
- 649 (8) It should allow flexible planting dates for different geographic areas of the state. '13
- 650 (9) Deadlines for cover crop planting should be the same when either aerial or broadcast
651 seeding. '07
- 652 (10) Aerial seeding should be funded as all other methods of seeding and should not exclude
653 double crop acres. '14

- 654 (11) The program should not discriminate against producers who sell forage rather than feed it
655 on the farm. '18
- 656 (12) The annual signup date for the program should be from June 1st through September 1st.
657 '12
- 658 (13) Participants should be allowed to determine in the spring, which fields will be harvested,
659 and which fields will be destroyed under the program. '09
- 660 (14) Fields should be allowed to contain blends of different cover crops if a nitrogen scavenger
661 crop is included in the blends. This should include the addition of legumes to such blends. '12
- 662 (15) Change seeding rates mandated for the cereal species that currently exist to be in
663 accordance with current University of Maryland Extension research findings. '12
- 664 (16) Give the option to adjust seeding rates and planting methods to facilitate late season
665 termination, green planting, intercropping, or relay cropping as an alternative to cover crop
666 burndown. '16
- 667 (17) Seeding rate should be calculated using germination rate and size of seed to achieve a
668 number of viable seeds per acre. '17
- 669 (18) Add sorghum to the eligible standing crops that the \$10 bonus aerial application for cover
670 crop can be seeded into. '19
- 671 (19) Recommend that MDA issue the first cover crop split payment before December 15th and
672 any final payments within 15 days after the crop termination report has been submitted. '19
- 673 We urge MDA to develop and implement an online sign-up for the cover crop program.
674 '10
- 675 Maryland farmers and/or Ag organizations should have input on cover crop program
676 and rate changes before those changes are implemented. '14
- 677 **Cost Share Programs**
- 678 Cost share programs need to expand to include small animal unit operations. '14
- 679 We recommend the flat rates and components of a practice be reviewed and revised
680 annually with agricultural input to reflect current cost. '14
- 681 Maryland farmers/agricultural organizations should have input into state cost share
682 program changes before those changes are implemented. '14
- 683 We recommend that NRCS, Soil Conservation District and Maryland Department of
684 Agriculture resources be increased, and/or the approval process be streamlined to reduce a
685 backlog of cost share applications. '16
- 686 We recommend that the State fund the MACS program with General Obligation Bonds.
687 '17
- 688 We urge MDA's Maryland Ag Cost Share (MACS) program establish a higher cost-share
689 rate for Young and Beginning Farmers. '20
- 690 The State should continue to fund the Manure Transport cost-share program. '20
- 691 We urge the MDA conservation grants and the USDA conservation contract programs to
692 reevaluate contract terms if the cost of labor and materials increase over 5% before completion
693 of the contract. '21
- 694
- 695 **CRITICAL AREAS COMMISSION**
- 696 We recommend that the membership of the Critical Areas Commission be comprised of
697 at least 50% farmers who own property within 1,000 feet of the critical area. '21
- 698 Due to the impact on the agricultural community, we urge county governments to work
699 with their county Farm Bureaus when they develop their local programs. '21

700 We are opposed to the inclusion of upstream tributaries and non-tidal water into the
701 Critical Areas Program. '21

702 We support legislation that would require the state to compensate, at the fair market
703 value, Maryland property owners who are monetarily affected by the Critical Area Legislation
704 and/or the Endangered Species Act. '21

705 The inability to harvest timber in the critical areas is creating an inequitable financial
706 loss for the landowner. We recommend that the landowner be compensated for this loss. '21

707 We are concerned about exemptions granted within the Critical Area for marinas and
708 other recreational water related activities. '21

709

710 **CROP PROTECTION**

711 We urge keeping all federally labeled crop protection products legal in the state,
712 counties, and municipalities. '19

713 We encourage utilities and government agencies when using pesticides to apply them
714 by approved methods and in accordance with labeled instructions. '19

715 In order to help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, we urge the state to
716 maintain a biannual collection point in each region of Maryland for the disposal of old
717 chemicals, chemical containers, paint, batteries and all other hazardous waste materials. '19

718 We urge the Department of Agriculture to continue the recovery program for banned
719 chemicals. '19

720 Farmers should not be held liable for any environmental residues or water
721 contaminated by a farm chemical if the chemical was federally approved and used according to
722 label instructions. '19

723 Furthermore, we believe the use of pesticides should be regulated by available facts, not
724 on emotional issues. '19

725 We support Federal law regarding crop protectant usage within 50 feet of wells. The
726 permit process of local government should not allow wells to be placed within 50 feet of an
727 agricultural property line, thus ensuring the safety of the water as well as the farmer's right to
728 farm his property. '19

729 We recommend a universal definition be developed for a "congested area" related to
730 aerial spraying, so that crops can be treated in a timely and effective manner. '19

731 We oppose the collection and distribution of pesticide use data beyond that collected in
732 the USDA NASS survey. '19

733 We oppose the establishment of a pesticide use data reporting system that would make
734 information available to the public or to "interested" researchers. '19

735 **Disease Prevention & Pest Control**

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

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

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

744 **Environmental Surcharge**

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

747 **Pesticide Stewardship**

748 We support participating in a Pesticide Stewardship Education program with MDA,
749 Extension and other commodity groups for educational outreach geared towards consumers.
750 '19

751

752 **CYBER SECURITY FOR THE FOOD CHAIN**

753

754 We support research and implementation of cyber-Ag. security programs to protect
755 local and state supply chains. '21

756

757 **DAIRY INDUSTRY**

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

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

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

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

767 **Milk Marketing**

768 Maintaining consumer confidence in dairy products is critical to the viability of the dairy
769 industry. Dairy product labeling should be truthful, accurate and be able to be substantiated.
770 '17

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

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

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

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

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

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

781 **Dairy Inspection & Regulation**

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

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

786

787 **DREDGE SPOIL**

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

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

792 We oppose dumping of dredge spoils into open water. '14

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

795

796

ENDANGERED SPECIES

797

798

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

799

800

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

801

802

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

803

804

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

805

806

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

807

808

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

809

810

ENERGY POLICY

811

812

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

813

814

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

815

816

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

817

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

818

We oppose the banning of small gas engines. '21

819

Ethanol & Biodiesel Fuel

820

821

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

822

823

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

824

825

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

826

827

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

828

829

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

830

831

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

832

833

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

834

835

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

836

837

838

839

840 We urge the support of government agencies such as the Department of Commerce in
841 the development of biofuels in Maryland. '21

842 **Other Alternative Energy Sources**

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

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

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

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

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

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

857 We oppose the use of "farm" when referring to an alternative energy generation facility.
858 '19

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

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

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

865 We encourage that publicly owned lands, brownfields, rooftops, and urban areas be
866 utilized to assist with the clean energy mandate in lieu of prime and productive farmland '21

867 Commercial energy facilities should have appropriate riparian buffer and setback
868 requirements. '19

869 **Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

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

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

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

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

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

879

880 **ENVIRONMENTAL STANDING**

881 We urge changes to "standing law" so that no farmer who is in compliance with
882 applicable law could be sued by a third party. '12

883

884 **EQUINE INDUSTRY**

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

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

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

892 We support the creation of incentives to horse owners to work with the Ag agencies
893 that offer technical assistance for implementing conservation and best management practices.
894 '18

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FAMILY VALUES

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

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903

FARM SERVICE AGENCY – COUNTY COMMITTEES

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

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

908 We support strong coordination of efforts between NRCS and FSA in modernization and
909 consolidation of offices and services. '14

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911

FOREST CONSERVATION

912 We oppose any new publicly funded afforestation projects in Maryland that does not
913 include a plan for the following: wildlife control, noxious weed control, and forest management.
914 '21

915 We oppose county ordinances that are more restrictive than state regulations with
916 regards to the harvesting of trees. '21

917 Preservation or establishment of forest land should not take priority over agricultural
918 lands under the state of Maryland's conservation or land use programs. '21

919

920

GAMBLING

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

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

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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

Regulatory Reform

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

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

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

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

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

983 Governing bodies mandating new regulations must fund the cost of implementing said
984 regulations. '19

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

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

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

997 **State and Local Agencies**

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

1000 We support the co-location of Ag agencies, Ag education and resources in regional Ag
1001 centers when feasible. '19

1002 We urge the Maryland Legislature to make English the official language for the state. '19

1003 Farm Bureau does not support the State Law (MD Code, Article 28, Section 2-116, Entry
1004 on Private Premises) that allows unlimited access onto farms and into buildings by the
1005 Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff. We support a revision to restrict
1006 the access of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff and agents on
1007 private property to no greater than law enforcement agencies. '19

1008 Many issues related to the production of agricultural crops in Maryland are regulated by
1009 government. The use of irrigation water, nutrient management, pest management, agricultural
1010 Best Management Practices and forest management should be regulated by the appropriate
1011 federal or state agency. County governments should be precluded from regulating these
1012 practices. '19

1013 **State-Owned Farmland**

1014 Maryland should keep productive farmland in production on all land it owns and
1015 purchases. Only land that is needed as buffers to protect soil and water resources should be
1016 converted to conservation uses. '19

1017 **Teachers' Retirement Pension Program**

1018 Considering the State's desire to shift the cost of the teachers' retirement pension
1019 program to the counties, we urge the State to work with local governments to freeze the
1020 present state pension system for teachers and replace it with a 401k retirement plan. '19

1021

1022 **GREENWAYS – RAILS TO TRAILS – GREENPRINT**

1023 We oppose public access to private land without the permission of the landowner. We
1024 recognize the value of urban greenways but oppose greenway designation in rural/agricultural
1025 areas of Maryland due to the potential for trespass, vandalism, or other interferences with

1026 production agriculture. Any legislation for the study or designation of greenway corridors or
1027 rails to trails must include a requirement for notification to all owners of private property that
1028 adjoins the proposed greenway before a study commences.’07

1029 Any study must contain a public comment period or hearing prior to issuance of any
1030 authorization for interim use, where contiguous landowners and other citizens have the
1031 opportunity for input. Also, the study should consider the effects of any proposed interim trail
1032 use on the safety, health, security, privacy, and economic interests of the adjacent landowners
1033 and determine if the right of way is suitable for interim trail use. If a trail is established, the trail
1034 sponsor should be responsible for liability, right of way fencing, taxes, control of noxious weeds,
1035 maintenance of the rights of way and other cost which were required of the railway for the use
1036 of the property easement. We promote the philosophy that if rights of way are developed for
1037 recreational purposes lands should be purchased from willing sellers.’10

1038

1039 **GYPSY MOTH CONTROL**

1040 We recommend that the state gypsy moth control program be maintained at a 250 egg
1041 masses per acre baseline. ’18

1042

1043 **INSURANCE**

1044 **Crop Insurance**

1045 We encourage the development of a protocol that would allow producers to establish a
1046 tax-deferred fund to self-insure against poor production years. ’07

1047 **Health Insurance & Medical Costs**

1048 Health insurance expenses should be deductible as a business expense for self-
1049 employed individuals. ’13

1050 We recommend that the Maryland State Legislature review the current mandated
1051 health insurance benefits and reduce these mandated benefits to better manage health
1052 insurance costs. ’05

1053 We support legislation that would place a limit on medical malpractice awards. We urge
1054 the Maryland legislature to address the issue of malpractice insurance to prevent further loss of
1055 quality health care. ’13

1056 We urge the insurance commissioner to control public service sectors to prevent
1057 unreasonable increases in overhead costs that are charged to users.’06

1058 We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits
1059 to long-term care insurance. ’10

1060 **Insurance Rates**

1061 We oppose any effort of the insurance commissioner to seek uniform automobile rates
1062 throughout the state. We further urge the continuance of differential insurance rates based on
1063 experience ratings. ’05

1064 We support actions to prevent termination of policies by the insurance industry because
1065 of claims that are considered “Act of God” incidents. ’16

1066 We strongly oppose the increase of unemployment insurance rates to pay for the
1067 unemployment due to the COVID 19 pandemic. We support repaying the unemployment
1068 insurance trust fund with federal COVID funding. ’21

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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

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LABOR STANDARDS

We oppose overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. '14
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. '12
We support the passage of legislation to exempt agriculture workers and point of sale workers in agriculture from minimum wage increase requirements. '20

LAND STEWARDSHIP

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

LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING

Annexation

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

Growth Management

We urge local control of any growth management programs and zoning regulations within our state. '11
We oppose any state policy that overrides county planning and zoning authority. '12
We oppose the premise of Plan Maryland and urge the state to slow down the process for considering it to give counties and citizens time to thoroughly review the plan. Any benchmarks and/or consequences established must be clearly defined and the final plan should be subject to approval by the General Assembly prior to implementation. '11
Smart Growth standards for urban areas are not always appropriate for rural counties. Different standards need to be adopted for eligibility for state funds for infrastructure in rural counties. '08
We believe no program (or parts of a program) should be adopted until we review and evaluate the accumulative impact of all our present programs. We need to know the inter-relationship of all the legislation and regulations dealing with growth management such as the Chesapeake Bay critical area law; the Nontidal Wetland Protection Act; federal, state, and local resource protection programs; the agricultural land preservation program; Program Open Space; and the reforestation law passed by the General Assembly. '05
We support a requirement for local governments to consider the impact of new development on water resources and current users. Development should not be allowed to surpass the level of water resources. '07
Any comprehensive plan must recognize private property rights. If a landowner's property rights are diminished, he/she should be justly compensated. '06
We encourage each county to develop an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO). '10

Permitting

We support the continued exemption of agriculturally zoned properties from building permits and inspections for agricultural uses as permitted in the zoning code. We further 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 on
1132 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

1137

1138

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 including, but not limited to, dumping of residential
1172 and commercial trash and waste materials on private property. '21

1173 We support maintaining adequate police force funding to fully meet the
1174 needs of rural communities and agricultural producers. '20

1175

1176 **LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM**

1177 We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law
1178 and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. '07

1179

1180 **LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST MARYLAND FARM OPERATIONS**

1181 The State of Maryland should institute policy whereby unsuccessful plaintiffs initiating
1182 litigation against farm operations in Maryland shall be liable for the defendant's legal fees and
1183 appropriate damages if the defendant prevails in the course of the suit.'12

1184 **Contributory Negligence**

1185 We support the current contributory negligence liability standard that protects livestock
1186 owners in Maryland from frivolous lawsuits. We oppose passage of legislation that would use a
1187 comparative negligence standard to determine awards based on the extent of each party's
1188 responsible actions. '04

1189 **Agricultural Immunity**

1190 We support legislation that would place a limit on punitive liability awards. '06

1191 We support immunity from liability on agri-tourism sites to allow more farmers to afford
1192 the expensive insurance needed to bring the public onto their farms. '14

1193

1194 **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

1195 We believe that the Legal Services Corporation should not be supported by public
1196 monies.'06

1197

1198 **LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY**

1199 Government officials and inspectors must be required to follow stringent biosecurity
1200 practices and respect private property rights at all times when visiting farms. '17

1201 We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. '17

1202 We urge MDA to work with USDA to review and clarify the tagging process under the
1203 Premise ID program for all livestock producers. '17

1204

1205 **LOCAL/TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECTS – STATE FUNDING**

1206 We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. '08

1207 We support the State of Maryland increasing funding to the Tri-County Councils for the
1208 purpose of including and funding agricultural and natural resources development in their
1209 mission. '20

1210

1211 **MARIJUANA AND INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

1212 We support the right of Maryland farmers to grow hemp as an agricultural crop. '19

1213 We oppose the production and sale of recreational marijuana. '19

1214

1215 **MOSQUITO CONTROL**

1216 We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the
1217 appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as
1218 necessary, including the purchase of needed equipment. '15

1219

1220 **NONTIDAL WETLANDS**

1221 We oppose the present definition of Nontidal wetlands as set forth in the 1989 "Federal
1222 Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands." This definition would designate many acres of
1223 marginal wetlands that possess minimal wetlands values. It would also include many acres of
1224 cropland that has been farmed historically. '05

1225 We support the revision of the "Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands"
1226 to exclude:

1227 (1) cropland that was farmed prior to the enactment of any laws dealing with the
1228 regulation; '05

1229 (2) areas with woody or natural vegetation that are not ponded for more than fifteen
1230 consecutive days during some part of the growing season. '05

1231 This definition should also be used for any existing or proposed state legislation. It is
1232 imperative that the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the
1233 Natural Resource Conservation Service review the definition of Nontidal wetlands and evaluate
1234 its implications on agriculture. Furthermore, it is our belief that all three of the criteria should
1235 exist before land is considered a wetland and we hope the manual will be amended
1236 accordingly. '05

1237 We support the designation of the Natural Resource Conservation Service as the lead
1238 agency for the development of uniform wetlands delineation.'06

1239 Agriculture needs to be exempt from mitigation for agricultural activities where the
1240 farmer has and is carrying on good agricultural practices. '07

1241 We recommend that when wetlands are identified, property owners must be notified,
1242 and an appeal or review process be developed.'07

1243 The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should
1244 be deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly
1245 compensated." '08

1246 Maryland regulations should not be more stringent than the federal regulations
1247 regarding non-tidal wetlands in agricultural land. '08

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

1252 We urge local control of regulations and permits limiting the use of wetlands.'07

1253

1254 **NOXIOUS WEEDS**

1255 **Noxious Weed List**

1256 We strongly urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, kudzu,
1257 multi-flora rose (except when used as rootstock by the nursery industry), Japanese stiltgrass,
1258 Palmer Amaranth, Asiatic tearthumb (mile-a-minute vine) and Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven)
1259 placed on the noxious weed list. '20

1260 We urge the SHA to submit a realistic fiscal impact statement related to adding palmer
1261 amaranth to the noxious weed list. '18

1262 **Compliance on Government-Owned Land and Private Land Under Government Contract**

1263 We insist that local, county, state, federal governments, and public utilities control
1264 invasive species and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by
1265 them. '18

1266 We urge FSA and NRCS to educate private landowners about invasive species of weeds
1267 and control methods before and during the contract period. '18

1268 **Enforcement**

1269 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the
1270 control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments,
1271 county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's
1272 efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program. '18

1273 We recommend increasing the funding to provide proper enforcement of the noxious
1274 weed law and maintain a viable education, prevention, and treatment program. '18

1275 We recommend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators
1276 make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or landowners in good faith, who are
1277 making a reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non-cropland. Furthermore, it
1278 must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or
1279 non-crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all the control methods outlined by the
1280 Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." '18

1281 MDA should annually evaluate grasses and other seeds used in buffers and other
1282 conservation programs, so they are managed to keep them from spreading to farmed fields.
1283 Ornamental grasses sold and planted in Maryland should also be carefully evaluated. '18

1284 We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop procedures for adding
1285 new weeds to the noxious weed list. These procedures should include an estimate of the cost
1286 to control the weed. '18

1287 **Public Education**

1288 We recommend that the State of Maryland increase efforts to inform and educate the
1289 public concerning the value of and requirements for continuing control of noxious weeds. '18

1290 **Weed Control Methods**

1291 We support and will work with the University of Maryland, Maryland Department of
1292 Agriculture and Chemical Companies to step-up efforts to develop new materials to reduce and
1293 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

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NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Nutrient Management for Farms

We support nutrient management programs and that all farmers should apply nutrients in an economically and environmentally proper manner based on sound science. '21

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

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

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

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

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

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

We oppose expanding the Phosphorus Management Tool beyond the current implementation. '21

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

- a. A simple and inexpensive planning process. '05
- b. Provide for "off the shelf" nutrient management plans for less complex farm operations. '05
- c. Prevent yield capping. '05
- d. Allow the use of scientifically valid nutrient recommendations from the University of Maryland or other public and private sources. '18
- e. Maintain the viability of animal agriculture. '12
- f. Agronomic deadlines with annual flexibility for applying nutrients that are not based on an eastern shore, western shore divide. '14
- g. Flexibility to allow the use of advanced nutrient management practices and technologies. '18

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

We support the optional on-line reporting system for Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) but oppose that being the only option. '21

Nutrient Management Plan Confidentiality

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

1354 Furthermore, once nutrient management plans are expired or out-of-date, they should
1355 be properly destroyed. '08

1356 **Non-Farmer Nutrient Use and Education**

1357 We support reduction of nutrients from all non-farm sources entering the Chesapeake
1358 Bay and encourage education of residential users of nutrients. '13

1359 **Nutrient Management Planning/Delivery**

1360 We seek full funding for Nutrient Management Cost-Share for the development and
1361 updating of nutrient management plans by private industry and by University of Maryland
1362 Extension. All funding should be evaluated for efficiencies. '12

1363 We support continued funding for the University of Maryland Extension Nutrient
1364 Management Program in order to hire and maintain adequate, permanent nutrient
1365 management advisors in each county to provide nutrient management education and plan
1366 development. '21

1367 **MAFO/CAFO Permits**

1368 We believe that the current nutrient management program more than adequately
1369 addresses agriculture nutrient issues. '08

1370 We strongly oppose the Maryland Animal Feeding Operation (MAFO) and the revised
1371 Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit by MDE. '12

1372 We oppose public hearings for CAFO permit renewals that do not include facility
1373 expansion or modification. '16

1374 When new regulatory actions for CAFOs are enacted, guidance for these regulations
1375 should be published prior to the effective date of the regulations. '09

1376 We oppose EPA's continued effort to expand the scope of CAFO permits. '11

1377 We strongly oppose any fee structure for reviewing or inspecting MAFO or CAFO
1378 operation by MDE. '14

1379 We support transferring the MAFO permitting program from MDE to MDA while
1380 decoupling the NPDES permitting process from the MAFO permit. '17

1381 We oppose air quality monitoring as a requirement for MAFO/CAFO permits. '21

1382 **Manure and Litter Management**

1383 The preferred use of animal manure and poultry litter should be land application for
1384 crop production when applied in accordance with best management practices. '20

1385 We oppose any effort to ban animal manures as a source of fertilizer for all field crops.
1386 We strongly recommend further corroborating studies – beyond those previously conducted by
1387 UMD researchers – that include different soil types, locations, and manure types before any
1388 ban on the use of animal manures on all field crop acres becomes a state regulation. '10

1389 Universities within the Bay Watershed should collaboratively research the benefits of
1390 organic nutrients vs. commercial fertilizer on leachable soil types and soils with high water
1391 tables. '13

1392 Field storage guidelines for all animal species where field storage is permissible shall be
1393 based on sound science recommendations. '08

1394 We support diversion of manure from equine operations from going to county landfills.

1395 We encourage government funding of composting facilities. '18

1396 We oppose being required to field stack mushroom soil compost. '18

1397 We support adequate funding of the Manure Transport Program to assist with transport
1398 and movement of livestock manure and poultry litter to all parts of the State. '21

1399 **Soil Testing**

1400 We request adequate funding to cover the total cost of all soil analysis submitted to
1401 comply with the state mandated nutrient management regulations. '13

1402

1403 **NUTRIENT/CARBON TRADING**

1404 We oppose government-mandated carbon sequestration or credit trading. '21

1405 We support voluntary mechanisms for nutrient and carbon reduction on both farms and
1406 forests that allow farmers and/or landowners to receive fair compensation for nutrient removal
1407 and/or carbon reductions. '21

1408 We support allowing Shellfish/Aquaculture to be used as a nutrient trading option for
1409 Maryland to meet its water quality goals. '16

1410 We oppose using the wastewater treatment plant's portion of the flush tax dollars to
1411 jump start a Maryland nutrient trading program. '16

1412

1413 **POULTRY INDUSTRY**

1414 We oppose all efforts to require poultry companies to control a farmer's poultry litter.
1415 '17

1416 We oppose the mandatory covering of poultry litter during transport except within a
1417 cost-share program, such as the Poultry Litter Pilot Transportation Project. We oppose the
1418 mandatory covering of spreaders under any circumstances. '17

1419 We oppose any effort to mandate moving poultry litter off the Delmarva Peninsula. '17

1420 We oppose mandatory or state-subsidized burning of poultry litter for energy
1421 generation. '17

1422 Poultry litter is an excellent fertilizer that if not available as fertilizer would have to be
1423 replaced with an expensive non-renewable resource that is mined or manufactured somewhere
1424 in the world and shipped to Maryland farms. '17

1425 For broiler litter, we recommend the scientific and research-based guidelines for field
1426 storage of broiler chicken litter developed by the Poultry Litter Experts Science Forum in
1427 October 2008, be adopted by MDA, MDE and EPA. '17

1428 We oppose government regulations that would require chicken grower/poultry
1429 company layout policies. '17

1430 We support Delmarva Chicken Association's (DCA) best management practices for good
1431 neighbor relations, which cover house location on property, manure handling practices, carcass
1432 disposal system, vegetative buffers, odor prevention & control, and contact with neighbors. '21

1433 We oppose state mandated air quality monitoring or air filtering on poultry houses over
1434 and above DCA's best management practices for good neighbor relations. '21

1435

1436 **PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1437 We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property
1438 without permission of the property owner or authorized agent of the owner. '07

1439 We oppose the imposition of deed restrictions/covenants that prohibit the production
1440 of an agricultural commodity on farmland. '07

1441 We oppose any mandatory retirement of land for buffers and setbacks. '12

1442 Government action that diminishes a property's value or an owner's right to use his
1443 property constitutes a taking of that owner's property. Therefore, the government should
1444 provide due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right has been
1445 diminished. The just basis for compensation must be at least fair market value. '14

1446 We support the passage of private property rights protection acts at the federal and
1447 state levels. '07

1448 We support legislation that would place the burden of land survey disputes upon the
1449 party disputing any property lines. '06

1450 We urge the state legislature to enact a law to require all land survey companies to
1451 notify all owners of agriculturally zoned land that adjoins a property to be surveyed, by certified
1452 letter, in advance of the survey and again before a plat is recorded. '11

1453 **Eminent Domain**

1454 We believe the Supreme Court "Kelo" decision violates the basic principles and
1455 standards for what constitutes a public use and taking of land. We believe that while eminent
1456 domain represents a vital function of government that needs to exist in carrying out the public
1457 purpose, we do not support the erosion of the standards or tests that each case must meet. We
1458 believe government should demonstrate the public purpose for the condemnation of land and
1459 then establish a fair and equitable means of compensation. We strongly support passage of
1460 legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to prevent the use of eminent domain by local
1461 government to take private property and then give it or sell it to the private sector to develop.
1462 '06

1463 We urge the elimination of the "quick take" condemnation process. '12

1464 We oppose any taking of private property by a public entity for public purposes without
1465 just compensation to the property owner for loss of business revenue as well as for real
1466 property. '10

1467 If the property taken is zoned for agricultural use, the compensation should be tax-free.
1468 '06

1469 When private property is taken by government for a public purpose and not used for
1470 the purpose taken, there should be a process to first offer the property back to the original
1471 landowner or the family of the original landowner before it could be used for a purpose other
1472 than for which it was originally acquired. '05

1473 We urge that the compensation must include the total devaluation of the farm due to
1474 the negative impact, including visual, of any eminent domain project. '17

1475

1476 **PROGRAM OPEN SPACE - USE OF FUNDS**

1477 The Agricultural Land Preservation Program assists in achieving some of the same
1478 objectives sought in the Open Space Program. The amount of land being purchased in this
1479 program has been increasing rapidly, thereby reducing tax revenue. Therefore, we recommend
1480 that the allocation of funds from the Open Space Program to the Agricultural Land Preservation
1481 Foundation be increased substantially. We support legislation that will allow the counties to
1482 use part or all their local share of the Open Space acquisition funds for the Preservation of
1483 Agricultural Land Program, thereby preserving open space without removing land from tax rolls.
1484 '21

1485 We urge Program Open Space revenues that were diverted to the General Fund to be
1486 repaid. We support using a portion of these repaid funds to be used to increase wildlife
1487 management in the state. This could include state cost share for vegetative fencing/sacrificial
1488 crops and wildlife fencing. '21

1489 We recommend that the larger share of open space funds be used for maintenance of
1490 present state-owned land rather than the acquisition of new land. '21

1491 We urge diverting a portion of the open space funds to be used for managing wildlife on
1492 state owned land. '21

1493 We urge that the open space program continue to receive 0.5% of the Maryland real
1494 estate transfer tax. '15

1495

1496

PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATIONS

1497 We encourage counties to appropriate the funds for maintenance and improvements of
1498 public drainage association ditches and urge the state to restore funding.'07

1499 Also, we encourage counties to investigate improved means of informing property
1500 owners of the easement rights of the PDA.'06

1501 We oppose any effort to usurp control of PDA maintenance from the PDA managers.
1502 Any federal, state, or private conservation practices should not prevent, hinder, or interfere
1503 with the maintenance of the PDA main, tributary, or right of way. '18

1504

1505

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

1506 We recognize the danger Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases (Ehrlichiosis)
1507 present to the public of the state. We urge the State and County health departments to gather
1508 as much information as possible to educate the public as to prevention, signs, and treatment of
1509 these diseases. We also pledge our support and help in gathering this information. '06

1510 We request research by the University of Maryland to effectively eradicate the deer tick
1511 problem to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease throughout the state. '06

1512 The State should maintain the highest level of Medivac service to ensure that rural
1513 counties have access to emergency medical care. '08

1514

1515

PUBLIC OWNED LAND

1516 Productive farmland that is purchased for parks or open space should be kept in
1517 production using best management practices until the land is needed for its intended use. '18

1518 We ask that legislation be enacted to make it unlawful for any government agency to
1519 acquire, by condemnation, any farmland in the state for the purpose of converting this land to
1520 parkland or recreation land. We support fee simple acquisition of parklands or landfills by
1521 willing sellers only. '18

1522 In response to the budget deficits of the federal and state governments, we urge the
1523 governments to review the inventory of public lands in parks, forests, refuges and wild lands to
1524 determine the cost to maintain said lands. We request the legislature to review and evaluate
1525 the sale of certain of these lands to the private sector. '18

1526 The state should compensate counties for the loss of property tax revenue on public
1527 lands. '18

1528 We recommend that consideration be given to leasing these woodlands for hunting or
1529 other recreational uses to raise funds to cover the cost of maintaining and administering these
1530 lands. '18

1531 We urge the state to require and implement a wildlife management plan for all public,
1532 wild and forest land. '18

Timberland Management

1534 We urge the State to develop a more aggressive Forest Management Plan and Land Use
1535 and Recreation Plan to include timelier timbering, increased recreational and hunting
1536 opportunities and a steady and increased income to the counties. '18

1537

1538 **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

1539 American farmers produce the safest, most wholesome, and most affordable food in the
1540 world. Any government agency dealing with food safety should not release information to the
1541 media unless substantiated and accurate. '08

1542 We urge the media to be accurate and unbiased in the reporting of food safety issues.
1543 Any media and/or organization responsible for distributing accusations of health risk not based
1544 on credible scientific data should be held liable for losses to producers, processors, and
1545 subsequent retailers. '08

1546 We encourage the local press to devote more space to agricultural articles and
1547 information regarding the local farm community. '08

1548 We urge the University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Experiment Station and the
1549 Maryland Department of Agriculture to develop positive programs to promote Maryland
1550 agriculture to the public through various media outlets. '08

1551 We recommend that all agricultural organizations develop promotional campaigns that
1552 would:

- 1553 1. Educate the public about the importance of a viable agricultural economy.
- 1554 2. Correct misconceptions concerning farm practices.
- 1555 3. Promote the importance of preserving farmland as it relates to the health of the
1556 environment.
- 1557 4. Encourage farm tours, farm-city festivals, and educational displays.
- 1558 5. Include a speaker's bureau.'08

1559 We encourage state, county, and local government officials to take a more active role in
1560 supporting, promoting, and defending agriculture. '09

1561
1562 **RAILROADS**

1563 government to take whatever action necessary to maintain existing rail services and to upgrade
1564 them where necessary, including adequate safety devices at crossings. '06

1565
1566 **RECYCLING**

1567 Throwaway bottles and cans are a serious nuisance to landowners and can cause injury
1568 to animals and can damage equipment. Therefore, we urge the passage of legislation that
1569 would require beverage containers be made of recyclable materials. Furthermore, we
1570 recommend that a sufficient deposit be charged on each container to assure its return for
1571 recycling. '13

1572 Due to the growing problem of waste management and its environmental effects, we
1573 support material recycling and the use of biodegradable plastics.'07

1574 We support the development of a state agricultural-plastic recycling program. '16

1575 We support recycling and the development of industries that utilize recycled materials,
1576 as well as development of markets for recycled products. '04

1577 **Tire Fund & Tire Recycling**

1578 The state Tire Fund collection program should be expanded to include a program that
1579 would collect used farm tires from each of four regions of the state annually. '16

1580
1581 **RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENTS**

1582 When a utility easement is granted on agricultural land, utility companies should be
1583 required to use the least desirable land and to avoid taking prime farmland where possible.
1584 Farmers should be reimbursed when lines go through their farm. The utility company should be

1585 required to pay for moving lines when such action is necessary because of building waterways,
1586 ponds, roadways, etc. We recommend that utility lines be placed underground where possible
1587 and that the areas surrounding utility poles and guy wires be kept free of trees, briars and
1588 weeds by the utility company.'06

1589 We believe that utility companies should use existing rights of way or property lines
1590 when feasible.'05

1591 We oppose permitting utility rights-of-way, including railroad rights-of-way, to be used
1592 for other purposes without permission of adjoining landowners and the holder of the
1593 underlying property interest. When a right-of-way is abandoned, the right-of-way should be
1594 returned to adjacent and/or underlying property owners. If the right-of-way is owned in fee
1595 simple, the property should first be offered for sale to adjacent landowners with right of first
1596 refusal upon abandonment. '07

1597 If a rail line is abandoned, rail banking should only be permitted without interim trail
1598 use, and permit landowners to retain abandoned railroad corridors for non-trail uses that will
1599 preserve the opportunity for restored rail use in the future. '09

1600 We oppose the taking of additional "Right of Way" to add "Bicycle" lanes to county or
1601 state highways. '15

1602

1603

RIGHT-TO-BEAR-ARMS

1604 We believe in and support the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which
1605 protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms. '15

1606 We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by
1607 law-abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, long arm, autoloader, or manual loader.

1608 Furthermore, we are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition. '15

1609

1610

RIGHT-TO-FARM

1611 To maintain the right to farm, we recognize our individual responsibility as farmers to
1612 help maintain the positive image of the ag industry by being respectful and courteous
1613 neighbors. '20

1614 We strongly support responsible and workable actions designed to permit and protect
1615 the privilege and rights of farmers, commercial fisherman, and aquaculturalists, to produce
1616 without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations, or legislation. We support actions to
1617 ensure that farmers are protected from liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal
1618 production practices. '20

1619 We recognize the efforts of the Maryland "Right-to-Farm" Law and recommend that it
1620 should be strengthened to protect and promote the enhancement of all commodities. '20

1621 We support an amendment to Maryland's Constitution recognizing that agriculture,
1622 which provides food, energy, health benefits, and security, is the foundation and stabilizing
1623 force of Maryland's economy. To protect this vital sector of Maryland's economy, the right of
1624 farmers to engage in farming practices shall be forever guaranteed in this state. '20

1625 Recognizing that agriculture is an essential industry, we recommend that right-to-farm
1626 laws extend to the ag-supported industry and supply chain. '20

1627 Before entering the judicial system, a plaintiff should be required to bring the
1628 agricultural nuisance suit before a county reconciliation board for review to settle the nuisance
1629 complaint between the affected parties. The reconciliation board's decision in nuisance
1630 complaints should be viewed as a judgment. '20

1631 Failure to follow a county's right-to-farm law and its reconciliation process should lead
1632 to a dismissal of the suit in court and full recovery of the defendant's legal fees. '20
1633 We support an amendment to the definition of a "commercial fishing or seafood
1634 operation" in the Right to Farm law to include the word "growing." '20

1635 **Funding to Protect Farms**

1636 We support private voluntary commodity check-off programs to be used in defense of
1637 environmental suits filed against farmers. '20

1638 **Right to Repair**

1639 We support legislation requiring agricultural equipment manufacturers to make
1640 available the necessary documents, software, and information to allow independent shops and
1641 individuals to repair equipment. '20

1642

1643

RIPARIAN BUFFERS

1644 We favor voluntary incentive-based programs for establishing riparian buffers. Grass
1645 species or natural vegetation is preferred. When forest buffers are established, provisions
1646 should be made for the future harvest of such trees without penalty. '07

1647 The width of riparian buffers should be decided on a case-by-case basis.'07

1648 Riparian and forest buffers should remain intact after a farm is sold for non-agricultural
1649 use. '09

1650

1651

ROAD CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE

1652 **Road Design**

1653 We suggest the State and County Highway Administration study newly widened as well
1654 as existing roads and correct any dangerous conditions created by landowners placing objects
1655 too close to the roadway. (For example: steel objects, reflectors, ornamental fences, or trees).
1656 '07

1657 We recommend that the State Highway Administration and county roads departments
1658 consult the Maryland Department of Agriculture when designing islands or the placement of
1659 road signs and mailboxes so that they do not prohibit or make difficult the passage of farm
1660 machinery. (For example, signs or mailboxes should not be placed directly opposite each other
1661 on both sides of the road. Staggering signs and mailboxes on either side of a roadway provides
1662 more room for the passage of very large equipment.) We suggest that batteries of mailboxes
1663 be used where possible and placed off the main road in new developments. '08

1664 We urge the State Highway Administration to improve access for farm equipment at the
1665 signalized intersections on Maryland highways. '06

1666 We urge the Department of Transportation to review the use of traffic circles on state
1667 highways to identify problems involved with moving farm equipment around the circles and
1668 through the intersection and to establish guidelines to solve the problems.'09

1669 We believe that land involved in highway interchanges should be properly designed and
1670 landscaped so that it is free of sight obstructions, attractive and easily maintained. We
1671 encourage the state to plant buffers on state property, including state highways on/off ramps
1672 and median strips and maintain them following the same requirements placed on CREP areas.
1673 '05

1674 No curbing should be placed on rural roads with less than 13 feet from the centerline to
1675 the curb.'07

1676 **Road Construction**

1677 An efficient highway system is of extreme importance to the economy of the state. We
1678 urge that a highway system, including adequate bridges, be built and maintained, to provide for
1679 the movement of goods and produce throughout the state. However, due to the high cost of
1680 highway construction, we recommend, where feasible, that existing roads and bridges be
1681 upgraded and improved instead of building new roads along different routes.'07

1682 We recommend that existing bridges be widened, and new bridges be constructed with
1683 a minimum width of 20 feet, to accommodate safe movement of modern farm equipment. '20

1684 We oppose any additional Chesapeake Bay crossing that is not at the location of the
1685 current Bay Bridge spans. '19

1686 We encourage the State Highway Administration to install painted islands rather than
1687 concrete islands at intersections wherever feasible. '07

1688 We urge that revenues from the highway fuel taxes be used for highway construction
1689 and maintenance only. '11

1690 We believe that the state's share of the overall operation and maintenance cost of the
1691 mass transit systems should be limited to 25%, with 75% coming from the users and the local
1692 jurisdiction served by the system. '14

1693 We urge the counties and state to enforce the law requiring anyone working along our
1694 roads to provide safety devices and personnel to ensure safe travel, as does the State Highway
1695 Department. '07

1696 We encourage the State Highway Administration to proceed with urgently needed road
1697 construction projects. '08

1698 We recommend that the State Highway Administration begin construction on a project
1699 within five (5) years after they acquire the land. Furthermore, we believe the owner of the land
1700 acquired should have the opportunity to use the land until the construction of the project has
1701 been initiated. '08

1702 We are opposed to an increase in the State Fuel Tax. '06

1703 **Road Maintenance (Trees & Weeds)**

1704 We urge a change in the law to mandate the trimming of tree limbs on both new growth
1705 and existing trees for safe travel of all vehicles on roadways. '11

1706 We encourage state legislation that requires trees and brush be maintained at a
1707 minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge and to a clearance of 16 feet on the shoulder of all
1708 public roads. Further, we recommend the placement of new poles and guide wires at a
1709 minimum of five (5) feet from the road edge, with reflective material placed thereon. '20

1710 We strongly urge the State Highway Administration to reinstate its policy of mowing the
1711 roadside rights-of-way and medians to ensure public safety and enhance scenic views.'12

1712 We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments control invasive species
1713 and abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. '17

1714 The government should increase the level of maintenance to ensure safe passage of
1715 vehicles.'12

1716 We urge the state and local government and utility companies to undertake a public
1717 education program to teach citizens that proper trimming of trees does not impact the life of
1718 the tree and there is a need to inspect, harvest and remove older, hazardous and diseased
1719 trees.'12

1720 We highly recommend that State Highway Administration (SHA) send at least a 6-month
1721 notice to adjacent landowners whenever plantings are being proposed along SHA rights-of-way
1722 that are currently in agricultural production. '15

1723 We urge the State Highway Administration to accommodate the movement of farm
1724 equipment into fields in agricultural production when installing right of way projects. '17

1725 We strongly encourage SHA to continue to allow farming on these rights-of-way and
1726 work with farmers to find other suitable sites for plantings on adjacent land. '15

1727 We oppose legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2009 (SB581) to amend the
1728 State Roadside Tree Law because it has created a more difficult permit situation for the
1729 trimming and harvesting of roadside trees. We support amendments that would reverse and
1730 simplify the permit process. '10

1731

1732 **RURAL COMMUNITIES**

1733 We support continued funding for the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), which was created
1734 to help improve the economic development in rural communities and towns. '13

1735 We recognize the Rural Counties Coalition and its goal of providing a voice for rural
1736 county governments during the legislative session. '13

1737 We strongly support legislation defining rural broadband/internet as a public necessity.
1738 '20

1739

1740 **RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM**

1741 Under the Rural Legacy Program agricultural production methods should not be
1742 prohibited and any restrictions to agriculture should not exceed the Maryland Agricultural Land
1743 Preservation Program.'06

1744 The Rural Legacy Program should be amended to permit, on a county-by-county basis,
1745 the use of Rural Legacy Program funds for the purchase of agriculture preservation easements.
1746 '07

1747

1748 **SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

1749 **School Standards**

1750 We believe that more disciplinary authority should be returned to classroom teachers.
1751 School bus drivers being a part of the educational system should have the authority to refuse
1752 transportation of any student who makes a dangerous situation. Discipline is a concern of all
1753 and should be enforced by the school system. '07

1754 We also support stricter qualifications and monitoring of teachers. '07

1755 We recommend educational programs at all levels to discourage people from engaging
1756 in illegal drug activity. '07

1757 **School Lunches & Farm to School Program**

1758 We support the state's Farm-to-School program and recommend funding be increased.
1759 We encourage all school systems to participate in and actively promote this program and
1760 purchase more locally grown products for school nutrition programs. '17

1761 **School Year**

1762 We oppose a year-round and/or a staggered school year. We encourage all local/county
1763 Boards of Education to develop a calendar that starts after Labor Day and ends no later than
1764 June 15th. '19

1765 **School Attendance Policy**

1766 Participation in agricultural education activities should be allowed as an excused
1767 absence and should not count against the number of allowable absences set by the county
1768 school system in question. '21

1769

1770 **SEAT BELTS**

1771 We are opposed to the expansion of the present seat belt laws to cover any other
1772 vehicles. '16

1773
1774 **SEED TESTING**

1775 We support development of a seed germination testing program with provisions for a
1776 retest or split test with another testing agency/lab if requested by the seed provider.'11

1777 We urge MDA to accept seed germination testing from any certified seed lab. '14
1778

1779 **SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

1780 We urge that the State Health Department re-evaluate the current regulations
1781 concerning septic systems and request that they provide flexibility that will eliminate undue
1782 economic hardship on landowners.'06

1783 We support requiring the use of Best Available Technology (BAT) septic systems in
1784 environmentally sensitive areas where significant impact to the Bay can be demonstrated. '11

1785 We oppose a mandatory requirement for periodic pumping of septic tanks. '10

1786 We support a requirement that landowners be compensated fairly for the diminished
1787 land value incurred by any septic legislation. '11
1788

1789 **SEWAGE SLUDGE**

1790 We recommend for farmland biosolids application, biosolids should be required to meet
1791 the federal Class A standard. '07

1792 We oppose any legislation that would allow biosolids utilized on farmland to be less
1793 restrictive than the standards outlined in MDA's 2012 Nutrient Management Guidelines. While
1794 we recognize that biosolids are an excellent source of natural fertilizer, we believe it should be
1795 utilized under the same standards as farm-produced natural fertilizer. '12

1796 We recommend that MDA classify dissolved air flotation (DAF) from poultry processing
1797 plant effluent as a biosolid. '19

1798 We support continued research and public education into sludge use to assure proper
1799 application rates and practices that protect farmland. '14

1800 We urge that additional research, specifically a 20-year study, be done on the long-term
1801 effects of the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, the farmers' potential liability
1802 and potential impacts to water quality. Also, we recommend that sludge should not be
1803 imported into Maryland from other states until this research has been completed. '08

1804 We recommend the Maryland Department of the Environment and the applicator be
1805 held accountable and liable for any environmental or crop damage caused by the application of
1806 Maryland Department of Environment tested and approved sludge by a licensed applicator. '08
1807

1808 We recommend that random samples of sludge be collected in the field, and a
1809 composite test be taken and recorded each day.'07

1810 We recommend heavy fines for those applicators that apply sludge over and above the
1811 recommended rates. This is to be strictly enforced.'07

1812 Fields laid fallow for summer sludge application should be required to have a cover crop
1813 planted to stabilize the soil and use the applied nutrients. '05

1814 Local agencies should be precluded from enacting regulations governing use of biosolids
1815 that are more restrictive than State standards. '09

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STATE DESIGNATIONS

We support the 1998 designation of milk as the official beverage of the State. '07
We support the 1962 designation of jousting as our state sport and oppose any efforts to change this designation. '07

STRAY VOLTAGE

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

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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

1. It must be profitable for farmers. '08
2. It must work to conserve soil, water, and nutrients with voluntary programs. '08
3. It must provide a good quality of life, for farmers and farm workers. '08
4. It must also provide an abundant food supply. '08
5. It must preserve resources (farmland and the communities) that support agriculture. '08
6. It must use and embrace new technologies that increase yields and farm efficiency. '10
7. Sustainable agriculture is not limited to organic or regenerative farming practices. '19

TAXES

Admission and Amusement Tax

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

Capital Gains Tax

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

Estate Tax

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

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

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

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

Fuel Tax

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

We oppose increasing the state fuel tax. '11

1861 **Income Tax**

1862 Maryland should allow taxpayers to utilize bonus depreciation as outlined in the federal
1863 tax code. '10

1864 **Inheritance Tax**

1865 First and foremost, we strongly support the elimination of the state inheritance tax. '04
1866 Until then, we support taxing nieces and nephews at the previous lineal tax rate on inherited
1867 property. '05

1868 We support legislation to provide increased exemptions under State law for family-
1869 owned agribusinesses. '05

1870 **Health Taxes**

1871 We oppose the imposition of health taxes on food and beverages. '09

1872 **Property Tax**

1873 We support the Maryland law that provides that lands that are actively devoted to farm
1874 or agricultural use shall be assessed according to that use. '15

1875 We urge amending the Agriculture Use Assessment Law to prescribe a standardized
1876 formula to ensure the full value of this special assessment is not offset by other adjustments in
1877 the total property value of the assessment for farm properties with a homesite. '17

1878 We urge amending the basis for a property tax assessment appeal to include evaluating
1879 the proper application of the agriculture use assessment to the total property value. '17

1880 The property tax exemption should apply to all growing crops, whether planted directly
1881 in the earth or grown in containers indoors or out. '08

1882 We support a 100% tax credit on agricultural buildings including tenant houses. '18

1883 We oppose impact fees on agricultural buildings. '12

1884 Any property that has a migratory labor camp licensed by the Maryland Dept. of Health
1885 and Mental Hygiene should be assessed using the Agricultural Use Assessment law. '06

1886 Farms operating on-farm food processing, alcohol production, and agritourism
1887 businesses should be assessed at the agricultural use tax rate. '21

1888 **Sales and Use Taxes**

1889 Maryland Farm Bureau supports the continued exemption of agricultural items and
1890 related services from the state sales tax. '11

1891 To clarify and prevent abuse of the sales tax exemption for certain ag purchases, we
1892 recommend an affidavit to be available for signing by the purchaser, in lieu of a tax-exempt
1893 card. '08

1894 We believe that clothing should be tax-exempt in Maryland. '16

1895 **Transfer Taxes & Recordation Fees**

1896 We oppose any transfer taxes and fees on transactions in which owners of a family
1897 business change, even if the business is not sold out-right – for example – within a family
1898 operation or structure. '07

1899 **User Fees, Licenses & Permits in Lieu of Taxes**

1900 We oppose the imposition of new or increased user fees, licenses and permits as
1901 general fund enhancements. '04

1902

1903

TIMBER HARVESTING

1904 Poor management of timber is a waste of one of our most valuable renewable natural
1905 resources. We urge the Department of Natural Resources and local park authorities to harvest
1906 the timber on all state and county owned lands in a timely manner and on a sustained yield
1907 basis. '07

1908 We strongly urge forestry management plans and soil conservation plans on all state
1909 and county properties. All timber sales should be put out for competitive bid. '08
1910 We oppose any further restrictions on farmers who harvest their own woodland.'12
1911 No conservation easement should prohibit timber harvest. '14
1912

TOBACCO

Master Settlement Agreement

1915 We recommend that as the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) is reviewed by the
1916 General Assembly each year the amount to be secured for the Southern Maryland farmers be at
1917 least kept at a minimum of 5% according to the original settlement agreement. '08

1918 We recommend that if the General Assembly does not secure at least 5% of the Master
1919 Settlement Agreement for Southern Maryland farmers, those farmers who accepted the
1920 conditions of the Tobacco Buyout be relieved of those restrictions in total and be able to
1921 produce tobacco once again for sale on a market basis. '13

Tobacco Industry

1923 We urge the state to rescind the restriction on the use of tobacco barns as stated in the
1924 Tobacco Buyout Contract. '06

1925 The State Tobacco Warehouse located in Cheltenham, Maryland, was built entirely using
1926 funds derived from tobacco farmers. Therefore, we urge the Maryland Department of
1927 Agriculture to always consider any agricultural use as its top priority and leasing only be
1928 considered as a secondary use. '06

Tobacco Taxes

1929 We oppose any increase in taxes on tobacco products. '09
1930
1931

TRESPASSING

1933 We oppose public access to private lands without written permission of the landowner.
1934 We propose stricter enforcement of laws protecting property owners from losses due to
1935 trespassing, arson, vandalism, littering, poaching, and looting. We urge all citizens to cooperate
1936 with law enforcement officers by reporting individuals guilty of such acts and to furnish all
1937 pertinent information. Furthermore, property owners should not be held liable for damages or
1938 injury sustained by trespassers. '13

1939 The maximum fine should be raised to \$5,000.00 for convictions of trespassing and
1940 destruction of property. '18

1941 We believe that unless posted as public hunting property, all properties in Maryland for
1942 all legal purposes should be considered "private" and "posted", with no need for posted signs
1943 or paint stripes. It should be the sole responsibility of the public to obtain written permission
1944 and to know the property lines and boundaries before shooting on to or hunting on any private
1945 land. '06

1946 The judges should be allowed the alternative of sentencing a convicted trespasser to a
1947 jail term. Parents or guardians should be required to pay the fine if a minor is convicted. The
1948 offender should be required to pay the property owner three times the amount of destruction
1949 including time loss and all court cost. '14

1950 We support legislation imposing penalties upon those using vehicles on property owned
1951 by others without written permission of up to \$5,000.00 fine, plus possible imprisonment of up
1952 to 60 days, along with full restitution to the property owner suffering loss. Furthermore,
1953 violators should forfeit their vehicle to the government. '18

1954 We strongly urge passage of legislation that will make it illegal for trespassers or other
1955 persons to interfere with hunting activities that are being conducted legally in accordance with
1956 existing laws and regulations.'07

1957 **Unmanned Aerial Systems**

1958 We request legislation be enacted so that no person, entity, or state agency shall use a
1959 manned aircraft, drone, or unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance or observation under the
1960 doctrine of open fields of any individual, property owned by an individual, farm, or agricultural
1961 industry without the consent of that individual, property owner, farm or agricultural industry.
1962 '13

1963 We support the use of unmanned aerial systems in agricultural businesses provided
1964 written permission is obtained from the property owner. '14

1965

1966 **TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES**

1967 To achieve the goals of the Tributary Strategies, we support the following:

1968 (A) Continued funding for integrated pest management (IPM) systems and the expansion
1969 of this program; '08

1970 (B) Additional and continued research and educational programs on minimizing nutrient
1971 runoff into the Bay tributaries from not only agricultural lands but also urban and suburban
1972 areas, as well as other commercial uses that use nitrogen-based compounds (I.E. deicing
1973 aircraft and parking lots); '08

1974 (C) The necessary and prudent use of agricultural crop protectants, based on scientific
1975 research, as they relate to profitable Best Management Practices (BMPs) which will ultimately
1976 result in the Chesapeake Bay improved water quality; '08

1977 (D) State and/or federal legislation to provide tax incentives or tax credits along with
1978 maximum cost sharing for the adoption of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and/or the
1979 purchase of equipment that would directly benefit the environment; and '08

1980 (E) Development of various methods to increase living resources in the Bay to increase
1981 consumption or filtration of the algae produced as a result of nutrients entering the Bay. '08

1982 All tributary teams should have representation from people now or formerly engaged in
1983 production agriculture. Any authority given to these teams should be advisory. '08

1984

1985 **TRUCKING & ROAD SAFETY**

1986 **Bicycle Safety**

1987 With increasing numbers of recreational bicyclists on rural roads, we support the
1988 enforcement and enhancement of existing safety laws. '20

1989 We recommend that scheduled bicycle, running or similar recreational events be
1990 conducted in a manner that does not inhibit agricultural activities. '20

1991 All bicycles should be required to have front and rear flashing lights and the rider wear
1992 bright and reflective clothing while riding. '20

1993 **Driver Safety Rules**

1994 We oppose any legislation to increase the age to obtain a driver's license.'20

1995 **Infrastructure Needs**

1996 We support the rebuilding and/or repairing of our state's infrastructure to prevent
1997 Maryland farmers from losing their competitive edge in a world marketplace. '20

1998 We support the improvements to all Maryland Interstates.'20

1999 **Inspections**

2000 We oppose any legislation requiring an annual safety or emission control inspection of
2001 motor vehicles. '20

2002 Truck safety checks should be conducted on a random basis. '20

2003 **Safe Movement of Farm Equipment**

2004 Farm Bureau is committed to promoting the health, safety, and welfare of farmers. '20

2005 We support educational programs for farmers throughout the state explaining the
2006 proper use and importance of a "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem". Furthermore, we recommend
2007 that a mass media campaign be developed to reach the non-farm audience with information to
2008 aid in recognizing the "Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem" when it is seen on the highways and
2009 roads to improve safety conditions. '20

2010 We recommend that the law preventing the use of slow-moving vehicle signs for any
2011 purpose other than that which they are designed for, be strongly enforced. '20

2012 We recommend Maryland State Highway Administration use the digital messaging signs
2013 to warn motorists of agricultural equipment use on highways during spring planting season,
2014 summer small grain harvest and fall grain harvest. '20

2015 All after-market or factory installed bright auxiliary lights, such as fog lights, located on
2016 the front of vehicles, automobiles, etc. and mounted in positions that are either higher or lower
2017 than the standard factory installed headlights, be declared illegal when in use unless they are
2018 (1) properly adjusted & (2) capable of being dimmed when the vehicles thus equipped
2019 approached another vehicle either from the front or from the rear, reducing the risk of the
2020 "other driver" being temporarily blinded by the glare and possibly losing control of his or her
2021 vehicle. '20

2022 Planting and harvest seasons require the movement of large farm equipment on public
2023 highways. Therefore, we urge farmers to use good judgment in their selection of times and
2024 locales of such movements and encourage safe practices. '20

2025 **Truck Regulations**

2026 We urge that farm and commercial weight restrictions be increased to be consistent
2027 with those of neighboring states. '20

2028 We support the K Tag radius being 25 miles or more. '20

2029 When truck gross vehicle weight is legal, but an axle weight is off, enforcement
2030 personnel should allow truckers to shift the load to make it legal. '20

2031 We support increasing the over-width exemption for vehicles hauling forage products
2032 up to 25 miles. '20

2033 Farm trucks should be considered "local vehicles" with respect to traffic laws. '20

2034 Municipalities should not have jurisdiction to decrease weight limits or restrict
2035 agricultural or commercial traffic on state highways. '20

2036 We oppose the limitation or restriction of truck traffic on state highways in Maryland.
2037 '20

2038 We oppose any reduction of axle weight limits on trucks. '20

2039 We urge the Maryland State Police to minimize disruptions and avoid work stoppage
2040 where possible for farm trucks caused by roadside inspections, and the Preventive
2041 Maintenance Program. '20

2042 We urge the Maryland State Police to review the Preventive Maintenance Law and DOT
2043 Regulations to permit a grace period to fix trucks stopped for violations. A priority list should
2044 be established for non-life threatening versus life threatening violations with different time
2045 periods to get them repaired. '20

2046 We are opposed to triple trailers in the state of Maryland. '20
2047 We urge that farm and commercial trucks have the same weight classification within
2048 each class. '20
2049 We support making weight limits for farm tag vehicles more equitable with those for
2050 commercial vehicles. We further support the creation of a Farm Dump Truck class tag for the
2051 transportation of farm commodities. '20
2052 We support the right of farmers to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers in any
2053 state where it is legal to do so. We further support the right of farmers to employ a title service
2054 agency or agent operating outside of Maryland to register trailers, semitrailers, and pole trailers
2055 in any state where it is legal to do so. '20
2056

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND

Agriculture & Productive Farmland as a Priority

2059 We recommend the University System of Maryland establish an Ag Producers Board of
2060 Advisors. '21

2061 We recommend to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,
2062 University of Maryland College Park that they establish an Ag Producers Board of Advisors that
2063 includes a MDFB representative. '21

2064 We support the alternative agricultural systems program of the University of Maryland,
2065 but not at the expense of "traditional agriculture" courses and research. '21

2066 We urge the University System of Maryland to provide adequate and such additional
2067 research as is necessary to maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Maryland. We support
2068 University of Maryland Extension in its dissemination of research findings and other education
2069 programs. '21

2070 We recommend the reestablishment of the statewide Extension Advisory Committee to
2071 advise and assist the UMD Extension Leadership Team to determine the direction and future
2072 structure of UMD Extension. This committee should consist of commodity groups and
2073 stakeholders to represent the different geographic regions of the state. '15

2074 We support the University of Maryland College of Agriculture & Natural Resources and
2075 its tripartite mission of research, teaching, and extension. Because of the many challenges for
2076 Agriculture in the future, which cannot be met without qualified graduates, we urge curricula
2077 for students who aspire to be the future farmers, agriculture leaders, ag teachers, extension
2078 agents, scientists, and more. '21

2079 We urge the University System of Maryland to fill and support faculty positions relevant
2080 to the Maryland agriculture industry needs. '21

Funding

2082 Since agriculture is the largest industry in the State of Maryland, the state should
2083 continue to financially support the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural
2084 Resources, the Institute of Applied Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and the
2085 University of Maryland Extension. All agriculturists benefit directly from the research findings
2086 and educational programs. The citizens of the state who are employed in ag-related businesses
2087 benefit because their work is based on successful agricultural enterprises. '13

2088 We believe that the University of Maryland should establish a line item in their budget
2089 for funding the University of Maryland Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Stations. We
2090 urge increased funding for agricultural research and extension to bring a more equitable
2091 funding support and correct the disparity between these departments and the rest of the
2092 University. '21

2093 **Maryland Rural Enterprise Development Center**

2094 We support the MD Rural Enterprise Development Center, which provides assistance to
2095 farmers for business plan development. We request staffing to continue this valuable program.
2096 '21

2097 **Law School/Litigation**

2098 We oppose the University of Maryland - School of Law filing suits against any farmer or
2099 farm business. We urge the state and/or the University to prohibit the law school from
2100 continuing this action. The Law School should not be permitted to represent out-of-state
2101 clients. Until the ban is in place, any case brought by the Law School against a farmer or farm
2102 business should be required to go through a state-approved mediation program before being
2103 accepted by the Court. If a case goes forward to Court, the state or the University should
2104 provide equal representation or compensation to the farmer or farm business. '13

2105 **Research and Data**

2106 We urge the University of Maryland and the MDA to conduct further research on small
2107 grain crops that will maximize yields while utilizing fertilizers in the best ways for both plant
2108 uptake and environmental benefits. '12

2109 We strongly urge that a portion of the funds allocated to the University by the state
2110 legislature be specifically directed to the dairy research within the University system so that
2111 research is more readily available to the producers. '21

2112 We encourage the University of Maryland Experiment Station to continue to develop
2113 varieties of vegetables, fruits and field crops highly adaptable to our area to increase
2114 competition with other areas of the country. '08

2115 We urge the University to continue the "Field Days" at the research farms. '21

2116 **Teacher Preparation**

2117 We urge the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to
2118 continue to develop and expand the current program that provides an Agricultural Education
2119 major, giving students a specialization in Ag Education leading to a career path as an
2120 agricultural educator and/or extension educator. We support allocating new resources to the
2121 program. '21

2122 **Tuition**

2123 We urge tuition increases at the schools within the University System of Maryland be
2124 limited to the cost-of-living index. '21

2125 **University of Maryland Extension**

2126 University of Maryland Extension has consistently been recognized by the agricultural
2127 community as the leader in providing farmers unbiased, research-based education to help them
2128 compete in a competitive marketplace. The strength of Extension has always been at the local
2129 level. We strongly urge that each county have a minimum of one Agricultural Extension
2130 Agent/Educator. '21

2131 We strongly urge Area Extension director positions be eliminated and replaced by
2132 previous system of County Extension Directors, and that these positions be filled by individuals
2133 that have an extension background and leadership experience. '21

2134 Due to agriculture's ever-increasing reliance on technology and research, we believe
2135 every effort should be made to fill vacant research positions at the agricultural experiment
2136 stations and specialist positions in the University of Maryland Extension. Maryland's farmers
2137 depend on the independent and unbiased expertise of these scientific professionals. We are
2138 opposed to using a multi-state / regional approach in filling these positions. '11

2139

2140 **URBAN AGRICULTURE**

2141 We support and encourage urban farming/agriculture. '17

2142 We support modifying zoning laws to promote urban agriculture and the right to farm
2143 within urban areas and city limits. '21

2144 We support ongoing skills development training in urban agriculture for all ages. '21

2145 We support the expansion of urban farming and the creation of a clear pathway to land
2146 ownership for urban farmers. '21

2147 We support grant programs to provide infrastructure for urban farms. '21

2148 We support the use of Program Open Space funds to purchase easements on vacant lots
2149 and greenspaces within planned urban developments and city limits to be used for urban
2150 agriculture. '21

2151
2152 **WILDLANDS**

2153 We oppose any new areas of wildlands designation by the Maryland General Assembly
2154 and encourage the removal of the designation from those added in 1996. Existing areas
2155 considered "wildlands" should be required to adopt soil and water conservation and forestry
2156 management plans. '08

2157
2158 **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

2159 We commend the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to
2160 assist farmers in controlling nuisance wildlife on agricultural lands. We continue to urge DNR to
2161 implement additional programs to limit overpopulations of deer, migratory and resident
2162 Canada geese, and other nuisance wildlife in Maryland in order to minimize their negative
2163 impacts on agricultural production, highway safety, disease control and the health of the
2164 Chesapeake Bay. '09

2165 We support the creation of a landowner ombudsman within DNR to focus on wildlife
2166 management on private lands. '17

2167 We urge county and state parkland to have a valid wildlife management plan to control
2168 and properly maintain the wildlife population on this land. '17

2169 We support the use of Wildlife Management Permits on both Public and Private owned
2170 lands. '21

2171 We support permitting individuals traveling to and from wildlife management activities,
2172 that are authorized by the Department of Natural Resources, to transport a handgun for the
2173 performance of those activities. '21

2174 **Bird Control**

2175 Flocking birds such as blackbirds, grackles and starlings can quickly devastate any
2176 number of agricultural crops, especially small grain. Therefore, we urge DNR to explore and
2177 implement effective solutions to the problems posed by flocking birds. '08

2178 Because they pose a threat to livestock, especially newborn calves, lambs, etc., we urge
2179 removing black headed vultures from the Migratory Birds Treaty Act. '18

2180 **Black Bear**

2181 We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western
2182 Maryland to other counties. '07

2183 We urge DNR to explore, develop and implement effective, innovative practices to
2184 control the black bear population in our state. '15

2185 We support the creation of a Bear Management Permit system for the management of
2186 troublesome bear. '15

2187 We urge DNR to create a bear depredation permit which would allow troublesome
2188 bears to be removed at the time they are causing damage. '21

2189 We urge that the bear season damage permit apply to the farm where the damage
2190 occurs and contiguous properties, with the landowner's permission. '17

2191 We support changes to the bear hunt which will grant landowners more equitable
2192 access to the hunt. '15

2193 We support the hunting of bear by all agricultural producers and their immediate family
2194 on property they own during the regular bear season without going through the lottery. '17

2195 **Coyote**

2196 We support greater efforts to reduce the coyote population. '09

2197 **Feral Hogs**

2198 Feral hogs should be regulated as a "varmint" species. '15

2199 **Deer**

2200 The crop damage and human health issues resulting from the state's overpopulation of
2201 deer are of major concern to Maryland's farmers. '17

2202 We urge DNR to lower the ratio of deer per square mile. '18

2203 We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to explore, develop and
2204 implement effective, innovative practices to control the deer population in our state. These
2205 practices should include, but not be limited to the following: '17

2206 (1) Regulate deer as a "varmint" species where local, overpopulated herds persist. '17

2207 (2) List Sika deer as an invasive species due to extreme crop damage. '17

2208 (3) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting
2209 seasons. '17

2210 (4) Use deer/vehicle collision reports to enhance the accuracy of the state's deer herd
2211 population count. '17

2212 (5) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the current DNR deer management
2213 areas. '17

2214 (6) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer
2215 herd. '17

2216 (7) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed. '17

2217 (8) Enhance hunting opportunities on public lands, especially on those properties adjacent
2218 to agricultural lands. '17

2219 (9) Promote the development of new and/or expanded facilities for handling and
2220 processing harvested deer. '17

2221 (10) Sponsor workshops between hunters and landowners to promote effective deer
2222 management. '17

2223 (11) Automatic issuance of deer management permits to a property owner when an
2224 approved Forest Management/Stewardship Plan on the farm recommends control of
2225 deer population. '17

2226 We support uniform Sunday deer hunting laws throughout the state on private land. '17

2227 Spotlighting of deer should be prohibited throughout the state except by landowner or
2228 tenant or landowner designee in cases of crop damage on private land. '17

2229 We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a
2230 plan to manage and control wildlife populations. '17

2231 We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program and support an
2232 increase in state funding or a tax credit for the program. '17

2233 **Deer Crop Damage**

2234 The following actions will decrease crop damage from deer, and we support immediate
2235 enactment:

- 2236 (1) Reimburse farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. '17
- 2237 (2) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. '17
- 2238 (3) Allow a landowner/farmer to harvest deer whenever deer are destroying a crop
2239 within the guidelines of the Deer Management Permit. '17
- 2240 (4) There should not be a fee for DNR to issue a Deer Management Permit. '17
- 2241 (5) Remove the limit of deer that can be harvested under a single DMP. '17
- 2242 (6) Allow for the practice of spotlighting deer while utilizing Deer Management Permits
2243 specifically issued by DNR for nighttime use. '17
- 2244 (7) Farmers should make every effort to properly dispose of deer killed on Deer
2245 Management Permits. The current DNR policy to fine farmers \$1500 for not
2246 disposing properly should be eliminated. '17
- 2247 (8) The landowner and/or agent should have the option to always use the weapon of
2248 choice for filling Deer Management permits. '17
- 2249 (9) Simplification of the deer harvest reporting process. '17
- 2250 (10) The commercial sale of venison from certified processing facilities. '17
- 2251 (11) Expand the use of sharp shooters for harvesting deer '17
- 2252 (12) Create a five-year trial period that declares antlerless deer taken under the
2253 authority of a crop damage permit to be considered varmint species and regulated
2254 as such. '17
- 2255 (13) A previous crop insurance claim due to wildlife/deer crop damage should be
2256 deemed by DNR staff to be sufficient evidence to allow issuance of a DMP. '17
- 2257 (14) A state tax credit for each deer donated to a food bank or other food donation
2258 non-profit under a crop damage permit. '17
- 2259 (15) We urge the State of Maryland to provide cost share funding to help deter crop
2260 damage. '21

2261
2262 **Fox Chasing**

2263 We support the requirement for fox chasers to obtain written permission from
2264 landowners to conduct the hunt. '08

2265 **Furbearers**

2266 We support the harvesting of foxes. '11

2267 We support the requirement that all fur-users take an educational course and purchase
2268 a stamp or license with a minimal fee. Landowners or operators should be exempt from any
2269 fee. '08

2270 We recommend that DNR reinstate the furbearer management program. '09

2271 Any person issued a Maryland Furbearer Permit should be able to use the best
2272 management tools established by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for capture
2273 of fur-bearing wildlife. '10

2274 We support raccoons being regulated as a varmint species. '17

2275 We support allowing the killing of beaver as a non-game species similar to groundhogs if
2276 they are causing property damage. '17

2277 **Hunting Ethics and Liability**

2278 The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is
2279 taking place. '07

2280 We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a
2281 manner similar to motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record
2282 after an appropriate time of good behavior. '07

2283 We recommend that the state vigorously enforce existing trespass and poaching laws to
2284 the maximum extent possible. '06

2285 Certified Hunter Safety programs have proven to reduce injuries and deaths caused by
2286 hunting accidents. We support a requirement in Maryland that anyone engaged in hunting
2287 activities in Maryland, including Regulated Shooting Areas, should demonstrate proficiency in
2288 safe hunting practices by completing a hunter safety course meeting the standards established
2289 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). '15

2290 **Hunting Methods, Seasons & Licenses**

2291 In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of
2292 citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management
2293 regulations. '17

2294 We recommend that the use of ATVs and other transportation be allowed for the
2295 purpose of harvesting deer on federal and state-owned property. '18

2296 We support statewide Sunday hunting on private lands. '17

2297 We support season-long Sunday hunting for the first 3 hours after sunrise in counties
2298 where Sunday hunting does not already exist. '17

2299 The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all
2300 interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and
2301 regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed
2302 during that season. '17

2303 We recommend adding an additional week of doe-only deer firearm season. '17

2304 We support extending the deer firearms hunting season through February. '21

2305 We support a longer firearm season on privately owned lands that overlaps the
2306 primitive weapon seasons that will maximize existing bag limits. '21

2307 We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland. '17

2308 We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. '17

2309 We oppose the reintroduction of elk into Maryland. '17

2310 We support a Regular Hunting License exemption, regardless of age, for the landowner
2311 and his/her spouse, children, grandchildren, and employees when hunting only on that
2312 property. We recommend that this exemption also apply, regardless of age, to a person and
2313 his/her spouse, children, and grandchildren who: (1) holds land under lease for agricultural
2314 purposes (or a sharecropper); and (2) lives on this farmland; and (3) hunts only on this
2315 farmland. We are opposed to the statutory changes made in 2006 which limit the license
2316 exemption to persons (other than the landowner or lessee and his/her spouse) that are under
2317 the age of 16. '17

2318 We oppose giving any further authority to the DNR to suspend or revoke any individual's
2319 hunting or trapping privileges. '17_

2320 **Waterfowl**

2321 We recommend that Maryland DNR obtain authority from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
2322 Service to take all actions necessary to reduce the resident Canada goose and snow goose
2323 population including opening the resident goose season for the entire year. '09

2324 We recommend that only a valid Maryland hunting license in addition to the federal
2325 stamp be required to hunt resident Canada geese. '07

2326 We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform
2327 throughout, starting about November 5th.'09
2328 We recommend that Maryland DNR establish a spring resident goose season starting on
2329 or after March 1 through March 31 to reduce the resident, Canada goose population to a level
2330 consistent with the established management goal for this species. '14
2331 We strongly support the continuation of the migratory Canada goose season and an
2332 increase in bag limits. '08
2333 We believe bag limits should be the same throughout the state. '09
2334 We request that DNR change the waterfowl blind license procedure as follows:
2335 a. One license will cover the entire shoreline. '08
2336 b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. '09
2337 c. Require that waterfowl blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of
2338 property lines. '08
2339 We support changing Maryland law to conform to Federal law which states that a person knows
2340 or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area to be charged with baiting. '14

Waterfowl Crop Damage

2342 We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. '08
2343 We strongly recommend DNR to propose effective ways (i.e. recorders or baiters) to
2344 reduce the snow goose population. '08

2345

YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS

2347 We support programs to assist young and beginning farmers to acquire farmland
2348 through:

- 2349 (1) Subsidized loans to such farmers; '20
2350 (2) Reducing capital gains tax by 50 percent for those selling young farmers farmland; '20
2351 (3) By assigning additional weight to young farmers when competing for farmland preservation
2352 easements; '20
2353 (4) Offering tax credits and incentives to landowners who lease them land; '07
2354 (5) Production, business and marketing training and mentoring services for them; '20
2355 (6) Support and greater promotion of programs. '20

2356 We support the establishment of a program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture
2357 to link retiring farmers with beginning farmers. '20