



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

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## Maryland Department of Agriculture

### Legislative Comment

**Date:** January 15, 2021

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 232

**SHORT TITLE:** Maryland Agricultural Commission – Hemp Industry Member

**MDA POSITION:** Information

#### **EXPLANATION:**

House Bill 232 would increase the membership of the Maryland Agriculture Commission from 30 to 31 members and require the additional member be appointed from the hemp industry.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Maryland Agriculture Commission is board appointed by the Governor, which serves as an advisory body to the secretary and deputy secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA).

The commission pursues the following priorities and activities:

- Encouraging the agricultural community to be more pro-active on issues affecting agriculture and rural life;
- Evaluating farm/agriculture industry labor and regulations;
- Increasing public awareness of food safety; and
- Supporting the department's efforts to promote agriculture.

Recognizing that industrial hemp is an emerging industry, last year, MDA filled the vacant “At-Large Ag Services” seat on the Maryland Agriculture Commission with a representative from the hemp industry.

If you have additional questions, please contact Cassie Shirk, Director of Legislation and Governmental Affairs, at [cassie.shirk@maryland.gov](mailto:cassie.shirk@maryland.gov) or 410-841-5886.