



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

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## Maryland Department of Agriculture

### Legislative Comment

**Date:** March 5, 2021

**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Bill 737  
**SHORT TITLE:** Comprehensive Conservation Finance Act  
**MDA POSITION:** Support with Amendment

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Senate Bill 737 impacts sections of the Annotated Code of Maryland through the Articles of Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources, and State Finance and Procurement. The information provided here relates solely to the impact on the Department of Agriculture, specifically page 5 of the bill.

This bill adds language in the Agriculture Article Title 8, Subtitle 7, Cost Sharing – Water Pollution Control section. It is our interpretation that the bill not only specifically allows landowners to participate in certain types of cost-sharing programs that provide compensation through greenhouse gas markets, carbon credits, or soil carbon programs, but it also specifically states that **any** Departmental contract, easement, or agreement may not prohibit or limit a landowner's participation in cost-sharing programs. While this bill is located in the Cost Sharing – Water Pollution Control section of the Agriculture Article, it impacts **any** Departmental contract, easement, or agreement the way it is drafted.

The Department of Agriculture respectfully requests amending the bill to reflect that the provisions of the bill only impact the Cost Sharing Agreements specific to this section of the Agriculture Article and not any and all contracts, easements, or agreements that the Department of Agriculture has entered into throughout the entirety of the programs administered at the Department of Agriculture.

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.

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 737  
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

In line 10 on page 5, immediately before “AGREEMENT”, strike “CONTRACT, EASEMENT, OR”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

In line 10 on page 5, immediately before “AGREEMENT”, insert “COST SHARE”.