Maryland
Department of Agriculture

*Office of the Secretary*

**Wes Moore,** Governor
**Aruna Miller,** Lt. Governor
**Kevin M. Atticks,** Secretary
**Steven A. Connelly,** Deputy Secretary

*Maryland Agricultural Commission*

Agriculture | *Maryland's Leading Industry*
mda.maryland.gov

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# MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

## Legislative Affairs Committee

**April 8, 2026 - 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM Virtual Only**

Google Meet:
Video call link: Google Meet Video Call Link
Or dial: (US) +1 252-680-0124 PIN: 271 417 060#

**Legislative Affairs Committee - A combination of the originally adopted Agricultural Policy and Advocacy Committee & Regulatory Reform and Oversight Committee. Responsible for monitoring local and state regulation that impacts agriculture, identifying shortcomings in existing legal code or zoning statutes where MDA could act, and discussing potential action of the Commission in support or opposition of bills. Works closely with MDA's Director of Legislative Affairs, Allie Cavanaugh.**

### Commission Membership

| Commodity | Representative | Committee |
|---|---|---|
| Ag. Education | Dr. Missi Welsh | CALE |
| Agribusiness | | |
| Aquaculture | Johnny Shockley | VAA |
| Biofuels<br><br>Committee on Young Farmers<br>Consumer | Raj Kathuria<br>Jenell Eck McHenry<br>Kellie Hinkle | VAA, CoWS<br><br>CYF<br>VAA |
| Controlled Environmental Agriculture | | |
| Dairy | Jenni Mallott | |
| Direct Farm Market | Amy Crone | Profitability, VAA* |
| Equine | Ann Merryman | Profitability, Leg. Affairs |
| Farm Bureau | Paula Linthicum | Leg. Affairs* |
| Field Crops<br>Food Processing<br>Forestry | Chris Rhodes<br>Nikita Bocharov<br>Hunter Pusey | Profitability, Leg. Affairs<br><br>CoWS, CALE |
| Fruit | Stefanie Reiser | Profitability, VAA |

| Commodity | Representative | Committee |
|---|---|---|
| Hemp | | |
| Livestock<br>New and Beginning Farmers | Eleanor Leak | CALE |
| Nursery, Landscape & Greenhouse<br>Organic Farming | Kelly Lewis<br>Emma Jagoz | Profitability<br>Profitability*, Leg., VAA |

| Commodity | Representative | Committee |
|---|---|---|
| Poultry | Zach Evans | Leg. Affairs, CoWS |
| Related Services | Keith Parker | Profitability |
| Socially Disadvantaged Farmers | | |
| State Grange | Richard Stonebraker | CALE* |
| Turf | Gordon Kretser | Profitability, CoWS* |
| University of Maryland – AGNR | Dr. Darren Jarboe | CALE |
| Urban and Small Farmers | | |
| VAA/Agritourism | Janna Howley | VAA |
| Vegetable | Russell Shlagel | Profitability |
| Veteran Farmers | Peter Scott | |
| Veterinary | Dr. Marianne Bailey | Leg. Affairs |
| Viticulture | Rachel Lipman | VAA |

**Committee Members Present:**
Tyler Hough Paula Linthicum Zach Evans Ann Merryman Emma Jagoz

**MDA Staff Present:**
Rachel Jones Susan Kivioja

**Call to Order:**

The April 2026 Legislative Affairs Committee meeting was called to order by Paula Linthicum at 2:07 PM.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A Motion to approve the November 2025 and February 2026 meeting minutes was made by Zach Evans, seconded by Paul Linthicum, and unanimously approved.

**Committee Discussion:**

**Key Bill Updates:**

● The MDA departmental bill extending the sunset for the Horse Council is expected to pass without issue.
● HB972 (Charles J. Otto Agricultural Education Promise Act) has advanced. It provides $100,000 annually to MAFE and $100,000 annually to Maryland FFA. This was viewed as a positive outcome for agricultural education.
● The CAFO bill (a Delmarva Chicken Association priority) passed third reader in the Senate and is expected to be enacted.

**Sunday Hunting Bill (HB1063):**

Discussion focused on the bill, particularly the provision regarding migratory waterfowl. It is anticipated that the migratory Sunday hunting provision will be removed to align with the House version.

**Other Bills:**

● Legislation extending the sunset on the Agriculture tax credit and the Urban Ag tax credit is moving forward.
● HB175 (venison donation tax credit) is progressing. The bill was amended to include a $600 cap, resulting in approximately a $75 tax credit for about eight donated deer per year. The goal is to encourage donations to organizations such as Hunters for the Hungry.

**Bills of Concern:**

● SB181 (phase-out of lead ammunition) remains an issue of opposition for the Maryland Farm Bureau. The bill proposes a 2030 phase-out date with exceptions to be determined by the Department of Natural Resources. It has passed the Senate committee but has not yet reached the Senate floor. ● HB91 (Neonicotinoid Pesticide Prohibition) did not advance out of committee. ● The trailer registration bill was amended to apply only to motor vehicles, clarifying that registering trailers outside of Maryland remains permitted.

**Bills That Passed:**

● HB925 and SB719 regarding biosolid use successfully passed both chambers and committees after crossover.

**Bills That Died in Committee:**

● HB716 and SB545 (land surveyor prohibitions during hunting season) ●
The leaf blower bill

**Horse Industry Board Bill:**

HB225, the horse industry board bill, has passed both chambers.

**Adjournment:** Zach Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Paula Linthicum at 2:23 PM.