

Approved Mar 20, 2025

**State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
February 20, 2025 (Hybrid)
MDA Headquarters, Annapolis, MD
Minutes**

Van Funk, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM

The minutes of January 2025 meeting were approved. (Swaine/ Posey)

Legislative Update

Guest Speaker: Rachel Jones, MDA

Summary of 2025 legislative session as of February 20, 2025 can be found at the end of this document.

SSCC ADMIN

- Pending Appointments:
 - Kent (FB), Queen Anne's (FB), Caroline (At-Large), Washington (At-Large)
- Financial Disclosure for SSCC Members- **Due April 30**
- SCD Personnel Directory: Sent via e-mail. More frequent updates in the future.
- Forest Clearing Workgroup: 1st meeting January→Follow-up late February. Details to come.
- SSCC Attendance Guidance (approved Jan 16)
- March Meeting in Washington County!

Appointments: NONE

**Flash Review
Open Meetings Act**

Loretta Collins, MDA, provided a brief review of select components of the Open Meetings Act as a reminder to the SSCC, SCD Boards, and SCD staff. Information presented will be sent out to all District Managers, Board Chairs, and SSCC Area Reps via e-mail following the meeting. DMs and Chairs are strongly encouraged to share this information at Board meetings over the coming month. Loretta reminded folks that at least one supervisor on each Board should complete the on-line training provided by the Attorney General's office but recommended anyone regularly involved in the Board meetings take the training including DMs and whoever functions as secretary (records minutes).

**LEEF and BFF Programs
Updates and Opportunities**

Guest Speakers: Alisha Mulkey, MDA & Jen Nelson, MASCD

Alisha Mulkey, MDA discussed progress on the proposed Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) program and Jen Nelson, MASCD discussed the Bay-Friendly Farming (BFF) recognition program through MASCD. The goal of LEEF is to create a tiered recognition program provides recognition for conservation effort and service to the community and offers appealing incentives for achieving such recognition. The current BFF program (an updated

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and revitalized version of the conservation stewardship program previously known as FSCAP) continues and is expected to align with the proposed LEEF program.

MEMBER REPORTS

MD Department of Agriculture – Jason Keppler & Byron Petrauskas:

Conservation Grants:

- MACS TAC will assemble in Early March. Flat rate schedules will be among the topics.
- Cover Crop TAC meeting rescheduled for March
- Developing training for staff on MACS and Cover Crop Program

District Operations

- 20 new MDA staff in process of on-boarding
- Ag Assessment Planner (Central Region) recruitment closed and setting interviews
- A couple more vacancies being evaluated on how to proceed
- Budget request templates going out to Managers in a few weeks

MD. Department of Natural Resources – Rob Feldt:

- Preparing for Arbor Day on April 2nd
- Senate resolution recognizing the centennial of Big Tree Program.
- Monitoring progress on proposed transmission line (Piedmont Reliability Project) as it affects some DNR land

MD. Department of Environment – Jim George:

- RFP for services to help update the 2011 Handbook for sediment and erosion control. Feedback will be requested- so stay tuned for updates.
- Adjusting to barriers presented by current federal climate in relation to cross-agency cooperation and funding freezes.

University of Maryland Extension – Darren Jarboe:

The University of Maryland Extension strategic planning process has entered the next phase, which is data analysis and interpretation. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet in March to review the draft materials, and a final report is expected in the April to May timeframe.

AgFS Extension programming was offered for biosecurity in poultry production. Many years of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) prevention work through collaborations with institutions of higher education, Delmarva Chicken Association, the Delaware and Maryland Departments of Agriculture, USDA, and other partners prepare growers to protect their flocks.

There was an error distributing 1099-G forms for cover crops payments to farmers. UME raised awareness of the issue and offered resources to the more than 6,000 farmers affected.

For FY 2025, the Agricultural Nutrient Management Program has received requests for 555 plans that have complete information and 479 are completed.

The update for AgFS Program positions is below:

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AgFS Extension

- AgFS IPM specialist, ornamental horticulture has posted on the UMD jobs website. The job announcement is at https://umd.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/UMCP/details/Agent--Extension-Specialist---Entomology-in-Ornamental-Horticulture-IPM-_JR100929. The best consideration date is March 17.
- AgFS local foods and entrepreneurship specialist position is on temporary hold.
- AgFS county educator, Prince George's County: The position is being evaluated

Agricultural Nutrient Management Program

- Program director and faculty specialist: The position description will be revised and reposted in early spring
- Nutrient management advisor, Allegany County: Will be posted later this month
- Nutrient management advisor, Charles County: Will be reposted this month
- Nutrient management advisor, Washington County: Will be posted later this month
- Nutrient management advisor, Wicomico and Worcester Counties: Will be posted later this month
- Administrative assistant: Mahdia Haque has been hired and will start February 24

UME Assistant Director of Operations position open for internal candidates on the UMD jobs site.

Publications

Dill, Shannon, Serena Taylor Newton, Andrew Kness , Erika Crowl , Sarah Hirsh , and Jennifer Rhodes. 2024. University of Maryland Extension Winter Meeting Data 2023." FS-2024-0731. <https://go.umd.edu/FS-2024-0731>

Goeringer, Paul, Sima Majnooni, and Holly Russo. 2024. Guidelines for Delaware and Maryland Agricultural Operations on Writing an Employee Manual." EB-2024-0725. <https://go.umd.edu/EB-2024-0725>

Award

Paul Goeringer was awarded the Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Center 2025 ERME Outstanding Project Award for "So You Want to Own Rural Land: Maryland Ag Land Legal Project."

Grant

Little, N.G., Henley, S., Ketterman, J., Nichols, K., Sorenson, C., Wei, X., Dill, S.P. 2024. Farm Business Coaching: Cultivating Entrepreneurship. Extension Foundation Agriprospects Workforce Development Mini-Grant Program. \$98,898.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Suzy Daubert:

IRA:

- Payments under NRCS conservation program contracts that are funded through the IRA are on hold, at the latest until April 20, 2025, according to the Executive Order. Leadership is optimistic on moving forward with these contracts.

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- While some Maryland partnership agreements include IRA funding that is on hold, Farm Bill work is continuing through these agreements.
- USDA leadership is assessing whether agreements, contracts, and other disbursements align with the new administration's policies.

Personnel:

- Guidance, HR processes, and review of the termination letters recently sent to probationary employees are underway.
- We are developing contingency plans to ensure we can continue working with partners and landowners to get conservation on the ground in Maryland.

General:

- Our offices continue to provide technical and financial assistance made available through Farm Bill programs, like EQIP and CSP.
- No matter what changes come, NRCS will continue to deliver voluntary, locally led, science-based solutions by supporting conservation, working with landowners, and strengthening our partnerships.
- We appreciate the patience of our partners and customers as we work together through this time of change.

Farm Services Agency – Laura Pleasanton:

- Very similar comments to what Russ shared at the winter MASCD meeting so I will keep it brief and stick to programmatic updates.
- Russ is still our acting SED. Still operating under the second extension of the Farm Bill.
- Still no authority for new CRP. We're still only maintaining what we have already approved.
- We'll welcome NRCS, MDA, and technical staff completing status reviews early if possible but I understand that we're in a whole new world now.
- ARC/PLC enrollment period for the 2025 crop year now open. It kicked off on Jan. 21, 2025 and runs through April 15, 2025.
- Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) enrollment period for the 2025 program year just opened on Jan. 29, 2025 and runs through March 31, 2025.
- Economic Assistance Payments were included in the continuing legislation. National ag news sites are sharing this information which makes sense, but FSA is still waiting on guidance for it. We're asking producers to bear with us and when we have the guidance for it and it's time for a sign up, we'll make every effort to spread the word.
- Things are changing daily with the extension of the new Farm. I didn't touch on every program nor loans for the sake of time. With that said, we do encourage you to sign up for updates by going to farmers.gov and scrolling down to the bottom of the page where you can subscribe to receive our newsletters and updates from FSA at the state and county level.

MASCD – John Swaine:

- **Federal Funding-** MASCD currently has 4 federal grants/agreements. Two agreements are funded through NRCS, including an agreement to fund admin/PSS positions on the Eastern Shore, and one to support the Envirothon. We've not received official guidance from NRCS on either one. Our admin/PSS agreement is substantially funded through IRA dollars which have an uncertain future in the Trump administration. Because the agreement duration is 5 years, MASCD does have sufficient funds to support positions funded through the agreement at least until more clarity is provided on the IRA funds. The other two are grants are through the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. We've received notification to pause funding for the grant that supports the Maryland BFF Program, and are advised that the funding for conservation projects along ditches is "business as usual". Yesterday, MASCD shared a link to [a survey from NACD](#) asking about impacts to the districts from executive orders and staffing cuts.
- **MASCD Winter Meeting-** Many thanks to those of you who were able to join us earlier this month. We're almost to the halfway mark in the current legislative session. Mike Mason continues to host bi-weekly calls to update MASCD's membership on significant bills. Last week, MASCD sent a letter requesting that MACS funding be restored at \$4M for FY2026. To all of you who met with elected officials, please know that your voice is so important this year with all of the budget challenges at both the state and federal level. We encourage you to continue to build on those relationships by inviting them to upcoming events, and keep in touch with their office to update them on issues impacting your district.

Upcoming Events

- March 25, 2025 MASCD BOD Meeting, MDA
- March 26, 2025 NACD Fly-In
- July 24-30, 2025 NACD's 2025 Summer Conservation Forum & Tours, Milwaukee, WI
- August 4-6, 2025 MASCD 2025 Annual Meeting, Rocky Gap Hotel & Casino, Flintstone
- September 21-25, 2025 NACD Northeast Region Meeting, East Syracuse, NY

Ag Commission- Gordon Kretser: No Report

Area 1 (Western) – Diane Flickinger:

Frederick County:

- Update: The Frederick County Soil Conservation District will be hosting its 4th Annual "Digging Deeper into Soil Health Meeting" on Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at the New Midway Volunteer Fire Company (12019 Woodsboro Pike, New Midway, MD 21775). Our featured speaker is Luke Jones from Understanding Ag. All are welcome to attend and the event is free! Registration starts at 8 AM and our program runs from 8:30 AM- 3:00 PM. Lunch will be provided. NM & CCA credits will be available. Please RSVP by February 23, on Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/4th-annual-digging-deeper-into-soil-health-tickets->

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[1119237512529?aff=oddtcreator](https://www.fcscd.com/1119237512529?aff=oddtcreator)) or by emailing Kendra McAfee at kmcafee@fcscd.com

Area 2 (Southern) - Amy Posey:

Anne Arundel:

- No Report.

Calvert:

- Calvert SCD Annual Dinner on March 20, 2025.
- Preparing for and reacting to (the best we can) the staffing and funding challenges that continue to occur

Charles:

- Charles County lost Jen Carlson in the Federal cutback process
- The District received notice of the award of another NACD TA grant to fund a conservation planner effective January 1; this NACD grant is funded by NRCS, so not sure if it will stick or not – no payments have been received thus far
- Board meetings have moved to the first WEDNESDAY of the month effective in January
- We recently held our Envirothon 5th Topic training. Another training will be held March 19 and the Envirothon competition is on April 9.
- Our annual dinner is scheduled for Wednesday, May 21.
- Charles SCD District Manager, Luis Dieguez will retire at the end of July 2025.

Prince George's:

- Sponsored both the Southern MD Pasture and Hay Conference and the Patuxent River Conference
- Save the Date April 25th PGSCD Cooperator of the Year Dinner
- Working with UM Extension and Quail Forever on the Patuxent Corridor Early Succession Grassland Project

St. Mary's:

- St. Mary's SCD Cooperators Dinner is Friday, February 21, 2025 at the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department Braddock Hall. Doors open at 5 and dinner is at 6.
- Work is progressing on the Hog Point Shoreline project at NAS Pax River. Approximately 2200 linear feet of rock sill and sand fill has been constructed.

District Wide

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- Dinner dates, 2/21, 3/20, 4/25, and 5/21!

Area 3 (Upper Shore) – Steve Freeman: NO REPORT

Area 4 (Central) – Van Funk:

- Cecil and Baltimore have had terminations of federal employees.
- Harford has had a couple of new hires.
- Spring Envirothon trainings are coming up.
- Howard's mid-winter ag meeting is Tuesday March 18th at Howard County Fairgrounds.

Area 5 (Lower Shore) – Terry Nuwer:

All districts attended the Winter Meeting for MASCD and some spoke with Legislators there.

For Wicomico:

- Select staff have been assisting with HPAI efforts in Dorchester and Worcester Counties.
- The District welcomed 2 new planners and they are busy with on-boarding activities and beginning training.
- We are assisting MACS with some transfer of property paperwork as a result of completed status reviews.

For Somerset:

- Office staff are updating conservation farm plans and assisting poultry producers with various CAFO compliance issues.
- Three Somerset SCD Board members and the District Manager attended the MASCD winter meeting and legislative breakfast in Annapolis.

For Dorchester:

- Supervisors attended the Lower Shore Delegation Event in Annapolis on 2/3.
- The District Manager met with Delegates and Senators on 2/4.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 AM (Posey/Swaine).

Respectfully Submitted,



Loretta Collins
Executive Secretary

Attendance: February 20, 2024

*in-person

SSCC Member	Name	Present	Absent
Area 1- Western	Diane Flickinger	X	
Area 2- Southern	Amy Posey*	X	
Area 3 - Upper Shore	Steve Freeman	X	
Area 4 - Central	Van Funk (Chair)*	X	
Area 5 - Lower Shore	Terry Nuwer	X	
MDA	Hans Schmidt Byron Petrauskas, proxy	X	
DNR	Rob Feldt*	X	
MDE	Jim George	X	
UMD	Darren Jarboe*	X	
MASCD President	John Swaine*	X	
Ag Commission	Gordon Kretser	X	
USDA-NRCS (non-voting)	Suzy Daubert*	X	
FSA (non-voting)	Russ Clanton Laura Pleasanton, proxy	X	

Organization /Office	Attendee(s)	Organization /Office	Attendee(s)
Allegany SCD		Howard SCD	
Anne Arundel SCD		Kent SCD	
Baltimore County SCD		Montgomery SCD	
Calvert SCD	Jason Leavitt	Prince George's SCD	Steve Darcey
Caroline SCD		Queen Anne's SCD	Anthony Riggi
Carroll SCD		Somerset SCD	Mark Carey
Cecil SCD		St. Mary's SCD	Bruce Young
Charles SCD	Luis Dieguez, Timothy Wells	Talbot SCD	
Dorchester SCD		Washington County SCD	Mark Kendle, Dee Price
Frederick County SCD	Heather Hutchinson	Wicomico SCD	Richard Glasgow
Garrett SCD		Worcester SCD	
Harford SCD			
MDA (HQ)	Alisha Mulkey* Loretta Collins* Jason Keppler	MDA (Southern)	
MDA (AG Office)		MDA (Western)	
MASCD	Jen Nelson*	NRCS	Eric Hines*



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

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

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Summary of 2025 Legislative Session

MDA Departmental Bills

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has proposed the following legislation for the 2025 Legislative Session. These proposals will increase agency efficiency, promote inclusivity, reduce administrative burden, allow specially funded programs to have adequate funding for staff, and incentivize greater compliance across the agricultural industry.

The background for the MDA departmental bills is as follows:

HB 140/SB 176 - Agriculture – Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan – Uses of Information **PASSED IN THE SENATE**

The proposed legislation would require the supervisors of a Soil Conservation District (SCD) to make a soil conservation and water quality plan available only **upon request** to the Department of Agriculture for record keeping and for nutrient management enforcement actions. The SCDs are currently required to provide this information upon request to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

HB 114/SB 249 -Pesticide and Pest Control – Revisions to Pesticide Applicator’s Law and Repeal of Obsolete Provisions

The proposed legislation amends a section of the Agriculture Article regarding pesticide applicators. The U.S. EPA revised regulations in 2023 on restricted use pesticides (RUPs) pertaining to who can apply them. The EPA established protection for non certified applicators by requiring training before they can use RUPs (under the direct supervision of a certified applicator).

Non certified applicators have to complete the training outlined in the rule, complete Worker Protection Standard handler training, or complete a program approved by the state. MDA’s certification plan was approved in November of 2023. This proposal codifies MDA’s EPA approved certification process for application of RUPs by requiring that:

- Commercial applications of RUPs be done by either a certified pest control applicator or a certified public agency applicator
- Private applications of RUPs are done by either a certified private applicator or an individual working under the direct supervision of a certified private applicator who is certified in the specific category of application being utilized.

- A non certified applicator can only use RUPs under direct supervision of a certified private applicator.

HB 262/SB 240 - Department of Agriculture – Maryland Agricultural Commission and Young Farmers **PASSED IN THE SENATE, ON 3RD READER IN THE HOUSE**

The proposed legislation would alter the membership of the Maryland Agricultural Commission for more efficiency. The bill removes outdated seats such as that for a tobacco representative, as the industry has changed over the past 20 years. The proposed legislation will streamline the efficiency of our advisory boards and commissions, reducing the number of working boards while ensuring that the agricultural industry is represented and reflective of modern agriculture. The proposed bill is the result of the Commission’s 2024 Strategic Plan and was unanimously voted on by the members.

The Maryland Agricultural Commission (MAC) is a 31 member, Governor-appointed commission charged with advising the Secretary of Agriculture. This Commission originated in the 60’s as an agricultural advisory commission to the Governor, then transitioned to advising the Secretary upon creation of the department in 1972. Over time, the appointed seats on the commission have changed to be representative of the industry, transitioning from regional representatives to a small number of industry representatives and growing to more broadly include other agricultural sectors. The proposed changes will modernize the appointed seats, remove duplicative representation, and create new seats to represent agriculture in the 21st century.

Modifications:

- Change the “Agritourism” seat to “Value Added Agriculture & Agritourism”
 - Mirroring and advising the new Value Added Agricultural Specialist role at MDA
- Change the “Horse Breeding” seat to “Equine”, representing the broader equine industry
- Change the “Nursery I” seat to “Nursery, Landscape & Greenhouse”
 - Mirroring & representing the MD Nursery, Landscape & Greenhouse Association
- Change the “Horticulture” seat to “Fruit”, representing the fruit growers of Maryland.

Removes the following seats:

- Dairy II
- Nursery II
- Poultry II
- Related Agricultural Services II
- Tobacco

Adds the following seats:

- Controlled Environmental Agriculture
- Historically Underserved Farmer
- Urban & Small Farm
- Veteran Farmer

- Young Farmer
- New & Beginning Farmer

Additionally proposed is the consolidation of 1 additional existing advisory board into committees of the MAC; the Young Farmers Advisory Board (est. 2004). The Young Farmers Advisory Board was established in 2004 to communicate the importance of young and beginning farmers to agriculture in the State by making recommendations to the Maryland Agricultural Commission (MAC). Currently, the board exists independently with 20 Governor-appointed members to identify and address issues related to young and beginning farmers in the state.

In this legislation, the Young Farmers Advisory Board would be dissolved and a standing committee would be created within the MAC, led by the proposed Young Farmers seat and the proposed New & Beginning Farmers seat, dedicated to accomplishing the original intent/mission of the Board. This will streamline the operations of the department with regard to staff time dedicated to the Board, as well as optimize the efficiency of the board as a permanent member & committee of the parent Maryland Agricultural Commission.

HB 104/SB 226- Maryland Farms and Families Fund – Purpose and Use – Alterations PASSED IN THE SENATE, ON 3RD READER IN THE HOUSE

The proposed legislation will allow MDA to manage the Maryland Farms and Families Fund (MFFF) directly, with an existing Inter Agency Agreement with the Tri County Council of Southern Maryland, streamlining the distribution of the Fund.

Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) manages the Maryland Farms and Families Fund. The Program's purpose is to double the purchasing power of food-insecure residents of Maryland with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables and to increase revenue for farmers through the redemption of federal nutrition benefits at Maryland farmers' markets and farm stands.

Budgeted at \$300,000 annually, this program matches purchases made with MDA's Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) funds, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) funds.

This program has issued grants to non-profits as required by the current legislation. The sole recipient had been the Maryland Farmers Market Association until the organization dissolved in 2020. Since then, a combination of the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission and MARBIDCO (Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation) have received the grant to run the Maryland Market Money program statewide and subcontracted SMADC to manage and distribute the fund.

This legislation will streamline the funding allocation process by allowing MDA to manage the program directly with an existing Inter Agency Agreement with the Tri County Council of Southern Maryland (TCCSMD). The only applicants MDA has ever had for the fund have been the Maryland Farmers Market Association and then MARBIDCO on the behalf of SMADC and FFARMD on the behalf of SMADC. MDA is required to grant the fund to a nonprofit, SMADC is a subsidiary of the TCCSMD, neither of which are nonprofits, rather government entities. It is time consuming to do the RFP, get legal review, get contracts done and then money out the door. Because the contract has repeatedly been issued to the same entity, MDA is requesting to streamline the process by granting the fund directly to SMADC via the TCCSMD.

HB 244/SB 264 - Plant Disease Control – Nurseries – Inspection, Certification, and Licensing Fees

The proposed legislation will alter the fees charged for inspecting nursery stock. It will alter certain fees for the certification of nurseries and the licensing of brokers and dealers and give us the ability to more efficiently regulate the nursery industry, increasing the Special Fund budget of the Plant Protection and Weed Management section.

An inspection fee based on the number of acres in production would increase as follows:

- 1 acre or less, [~~\$10~~] \$20
- More than 1 acre to 5 acres, [~~\$20~~] \$30
- More than 5 acres to 10 acres, [~~\$30~~] \$40
- More than 10 acres, [~~\$3~~] \$5 for each acre, or part of any acre, up to a maximum of [~~\$1,000~~] \$1,500.

The annual nursery certification fee shall be [~~\$100~~] \$150.

Each broker or dealer shall pay an annual license fee of [~~\$100~~] \$150.

HOT TOPIC BILLS

SB 428/HB 506 - Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act

Establishing the Maryland Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Program; establishing the Maryland Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Program Fund to support actions associated with fulfilling the Program's purpose; altering the definition of "healthy soils" for purposes of the Maryland Healthy Soils Program; exempting certain holders of certain fishing licenses from the requirement to obtain a food establishment license from the Maryland Department of Health; establishing the Water Quality Monitoring Program; etc.

SB 345/HB 386 Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions

Requiring, by January 1, 2026, the Department of Agriculture to develop and maintain a list of certain registered pesticides that list PFAS chemicals as an active ingredient on the labeling accompanying the pesticide; prohibiting, beginning June 1, 2026, a person from using, for certain purposes, PFAS pesticides listed by the Department; prohibiting, beginning June 1, 2028, a person from using PFAS pesticides in the State; etc

SB 732/HB 909 - Sewage Sludge Utilization Permits - Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances - Concentration Limits

Requiring certain sewage sludge utilization permits issued or renewed by the Department of the Environment to limit the concentration of certain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances to 1 microgram per kilogram, the level established in certain health-based standards, or the level established by the Department under the Act; establishing requirements for the demonstration of compliance with the limits established under the Act; and authorizing the Department to establish certain additional limits by regulation.

HB 907 - Property Tax Credit - Urban Agricultural Property - Alterations

Altering eligibility for a tax credit against the county or municipal corporation property tax imposed on certain urban agricultural property; and requiring a county or municipal corporation that grants the tax credit to provide notice of the termination of the credit at least 1 year in advance and the opportunity to be heard to the public before the county or municipal corporation may exercise its authority to terminate the credit.

SB 898/HB 1175 - Nutrient Management – Tidal Buffer – Vegetative Buffers and Restriction on Fertilizer Application

Authorizing, in accordance with technical specifications adopted by the Department of Agriculture, that State cost-share funding be made available for installing various vegetative buffer practices on land within the 100-foot tidal buffer on an agricultural operation; prohibiting a nutrient management plan renewed after July 1, 2025, from allowing a person to apply certain fertilizer to land within the 100-foot tidal buffer; etc.

SB 932/HB 1342 Pesticide and Pest Control - State-Owned Property - Pesticide Use Restrictions and Pollinator Habitat

Authorizing a person to apply a pesticide on State-owned property only if the person is applying a listed pesticide or a registered pesticide for specified purposes; requiring the Department of Agriculture to develop a model pesticide and pollinator habitat management plan to be implemented on State-owned and managed property; and requiring a unit of State government that manages tracts of State-owned property to work with the Department to adapt the model plan.

HB 42/SB 134 Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established

Establishing the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program in the Department of Agriculture to award grants to eligible entities to develop and implement on-farm organics recycling and compost use, wasted food prevention, and food rescue; establishing a solid waste disposal surcharge on the final disposal of solid waste in the State; requiring the Department to report to the General Assembly yearly beginning December 31, 2027, on the grants awarded, and the impact on job creation, producers, and food waste prevention; etc.

SB 913/HB 1039 - Department of Agriculture - Public Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment - Registration, Regulation, and Oversight

Requiring the owner of public electric vehicle supply equipment to register with the Secretary of Agriculture on or before certain dates; applying certain provisions of law regarding weights and measures to public electric vehicle supply equipment; requiring the Secretary to establish a program to test the weight and measure of public electric vehicle supply equipment and ensure the equipment conforms to certain standards; etc.

SB 203/HB 225 - Vehicle Laws - Exceptional Hauling Permits for Farm Products

Creating an exception for vehicles carrying fluid milk products to the prohibition against driving a vehicle subject to an exceptional hauling permit on the interstate highway system; altering certain weight limits and tolerances under an exceptional hauling permit; altering the preventive maintenance documents that an individual operating under an exceptional hauling permit must possess; and altering certain record-keeping requirements and the application of certain administrative penalties under an exceptional hauling permit.

HB 278 - Income Tax - Subtraction Modification - Enhanced Agricultural Management Equipment

Altering a subtraction modification under the Maryland income tax for enhanced agricultural management equipment to include equipment that the Secretary of Agriculture determines by regulation to qualify as enhanced agricultural management equipment; and applying the Act to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

HB 9 - Public Safety - Food System Resiliency Council - Definitions and Reports

Altering certain definitions related to the Food Resiliency Council; defining what constitutes "healthy food priority areas" as predominantly lower-income areas that have limited access to retail outlets that sell, affordable, healthy foods; defining "wasted food" as food not used for its intended purpose; requiring the Council to make recommendations to increase the availability of

local foods, create market opportunities for Maryland food businesses, and expand access to small scale food production infrastructure; etc.

HB 834/SB 806 - Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibition

Prohibiting a certain farm owner or operator from knowingly confining egg-laying hens in an enclosure that is not a cage-free housing system and does not meet certain space requirements, subject to certain exceptions, on and after January 1, 2030; and prohibiting a business owner or operator or a farm owner or operator from selling shell eggs or egg products without a certain certification of compliance on and after January 1, 2030.

There are 9 bills pertaining to transmission lines and/or eminent domain, none have moved out of committees.

SB 34/HB 640

HB 1406

HB 827/SB 983

SB 903 - Pertaining to data centers

HB829

SB 952/HB 1397

There are 20 bills pertaining to solar energy. Hearings begin today and tomorrow for them.

HB1036/SB 931 - Has a strong chance of passing based on sponsors

HB 827/SB 983 - Has a strong chance of passing based on sponsors

HB 1061

HB 904

HB 1111 - Pertains to siting on brownfields

SB 640/HB 742 - Prohibits taking of land via eminent domain for solar

HB 505/SB 434 - This is the Governor's bill. Has a strong chance of passing

SB 316/HB 398

SB 716

SB 804

SB 10/HB 220 -This is the Senate President's bill. Has a strong chance of passing

HB 739/SB 478 - Probably won't pass based on sponsors

SB 120/HB 4

Please contact Rachel Jones, Director of Government Relations with any questions at Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov.