

THE FRONT PAGE

News & Views You Can Use

The 2005 Maryland Legislative Session

The Count Down Begins!

- 68 days into the 90 day session
- 22 days left (as of press time)
- 47 Senators
- 141 Delegates
- 2,619 Bills in House & Senate
- 13 slots-related bills; 7 killed, 4 stalled, 1 (regarding ownership) pending,
- 1 Slots Bill actually moving back and forth across the aisle, from House to Senate
- 55 pages in the Slots Bill passed by the House (average bill is between 2 to 7 pages)

The Maryland General Assembly made history when President of the House Mike Busch allowed a slots bill to pass. The House Bill, of course, was very different from the slots bill passed by the Senate. The House has refused to consider the Senate's bill, so the Senate has voted and passed—with amendments—the House bill. Because the bill has amendments, there is no guarantee that the House will agree to this version. The session isn't over, and—as they say—“it ain't over until it's over.” The version of the bill passed by the Senate today could be drastically different from any bill still being considered by the time you read this. Therefore, we are not even going to bother to summarize the current versions. If you would like to check out the latest incarnations, or the slots bills stalled or killed, visit equiery.com and click on Maryland Legislature.

At The Equiery, we try to scout for bills that affect the equestrian community but may get overlooked in the mainstream media by the issue du jour.

Below are the bills that caught our attention, and if, after read-

ing about these bills, you would like to let your representatives know your opinion on the bill, you can contact your representative through the website. Just visit equiery.com, click on Maryland Legislature, and the site will help you figure out who your delegate or senator is and how to contact him or her. They want to hear from you!

Shorthand:

Committees can choose to sit on bills, never letting them “out of committee.” Sometimes, they can “still be in committee” for legitimate reasons; other times the committees do not want to make a strong statement by voting them out unfavorably, so they let them languish, and this may be referred to as “stalled in committee.” A bill that is stalled may still be acted upon before session is over—but not always. A committee kills a bill by giving it an unfavorable report.

HB = House Bill; SB = Senate Bill; M&L&P = Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation; DNR = Department of Natural Resources; MDA = Maryland Department of Agriculture.

ATTENTION STABLE OWNERS: MINIMUM WAGE BILLS & GATOR LIMITS

Both minimum wage bills are opposed by the Farm Bureau.

HB 13: requires employers to pay a minimum wage of \$7.00 per hour or the rate set under federal law if it is higher; allows employers to pay a worker under the age of 20 \$5.75 per hour for 90 days after initial employment. Heard March 10, no action as of press time.

HB 391: increases the minimum wage to \$6.15 per hour in Maryland; passed House with amendments, crossed to Senate.

HB 1251 Registration of Off-the-Road Vehicles

Requires all-terrain vehicles, mini-motorcycles, mini-scooters, and dirt bikes, to be registered with the MVA as Class O (Off-the-road vehicles). These vehicles would not be allowed to operate before 7 a.m. or after 8 p.m. and riders under age 16 must be supervised by a parent/guardian. The Maryland Farm Bureau is supporting this bill with an amendment to have on-farm ATVs considered farm equipment and exempt from registration requirements. Time restrictions on the use of ATVs on the farm would severely hinder a farmer's ability to utilize this extremely versatile piece of equipment, whether it's early-morning feeding or rounding up livestock (e.g. horses) at the end of the day. Heard March 9, no action as of press time.

ATTENTION ALL HORSE FARM OWNERS:

HB 846: Using Land Value Taxation To Fund Thornton

This bill, which is scheduled to be heard March 23, is a way to avoid funding the Thornton Education program via slots, but it would hit owners of significant acreage very hard as it requires an increase in state property taxes to pay the full cost of the education program. Despite the fact that it exempts from tax the first \$15,000 in value for agricultural land and the first \$40,000 in value for a principal residence, it still would be a whammy to owners of all land, from 3 acre “farmettes” on up. The Maryland Farm Bureau is opposing any increase property tax rates and supporting the funding of the Thornton program through slots at the racetracks.

HB 1055: Requiring Public Hearings for Ag Buildings Over 20' High

Throws up yet another road block to ag-related businesses; originally designed to curb ham radio towers, this bill sweeps in all ag buildings, and is being heavily lobbied for by the Montgomery County delegation. Every time Montgomery County takes one step forward to support equine business development, they seem to take another step backward somewhere else. Does the county want horse businesses in it? Of course, this bill would affect more than just horse businesses—it would affect all ag industries. Bill was heard on March 4, no action as of press time.

Sunday Hunting, HB128: Dividing The Horse Industry

The issue of Sunday Hunting is beginning to divide the equestrian community, as horse owners who are also crop and hay farmers are desperate for any measure that will help to curb the deer population that is destroying their crops. Meanwhile, trail riders, fox-chasers and other park users remain opposed to any Sunday Hunting as it eliminates the ability of anyone else to use the park during those weeks. The Maryland Horse Council has a position of supporting all methods of deer control, including extending the season, increasing the bag limits, raising the requirement to harvest more doe (actually, “antler-less deer”), except Sunday Hunting. Farm Bureau supports Sunday Hunting measures. Crop farmers who own horses or cater to the horse industry are caught in a bind. Limited Sunday Hunting has already

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IF YOU HAVE NEWS, VIEWS OR UPDATES TO CONTRIBUTE, PLEASE SEND THEM TO Editor at The Equiery, P.O. Box 610, Lisbon, MD 21765 • FAX: 410-489-2828 • email editor@equiery.com. Be sure to include your full name, phone number and address. All submissions become the property of The Equiery.

been approved for some counties. HB 128 would remove Anne Arundel County from the list of counties in which deer hunting on private lands on Sundays is prohibited. Delegates from Montgomery County had hoped to amend the bill to include their county, but the bill passed out of the House on March 21, with some amendments, but not the inclusion of Montgomery.

ATTENTION TRAIL RIDERS *HB 1290 Titling and Registration of Off-Highway Vehicles*

Horse people should take particular note of this bill, which establishes the Off-Highway Vehicle Fund within the DNRs, an Off-Highway Vehicle Trails Advisory Committee, and registration requirements for Class O (off-highway) vehicles: ATVs, dirt-bikes, and snowmobiles. The money for the Fund will be generated from fees paid for the registration and will be used to build and maintain trails for the use of off-highway vehicles. The Advisory Committee is to act in an advisory capacity to the DNR and will consist of representatives from various off-road vehicle interest groups, as well as MFB. The Committee will make recommendations on trail sites, site acquisition, construction, development, and maintenance, as well as other issues related to off-highway vehicles. ATVs owned by a farmer and used in the daily business of farming are exempt from registration requirements. There is provision in the bill requiring riders of off-highway vehicles to obtain written permission from private property owners and to carry it with them while on such property. Farm Bureau supports HB1290. Trail riders should take note of this bill, because—if it passes—it will provide a dedicated funding source for ATV trails on public park land. To date, trail riders do not have a dedicated funding source for improve-

ments to bridle trails. If this bill passes, where will DNR focus its trail efforts—on those trails with dedicated funding, or trails for which funding is scarce or questionable? As the State coffers get leaner, and as more and more State projects become self-funding through user fees, trail riders will need to consider what mechanism they are going to employ that allows for (or requires) user fees to be collected from trail riders, and then dedicated to the improvements of bridle trails. Heard March 9, no action as of press time.

HB 1149: Transfer of Preakness Stakes Name and Trademarks

The State tried this extortion maneuver last year, with a similar bill that would prohibit slots at Pimlico unless the Maryland Jockey Club (which owns Pimlico) transfers the copyrights, trademarks, services marks, and trade names for the Preakness and the Woodlawn Vase to the State of Maryland. (What next? Attempts by the Government to hijack the intellectual property rights for the trademarks for Coke® and Xerox®.) Heard March 2; we hope the House kills it in such a fashion that we do not see any more ghosts of it.

HB 465: Forest or Park Reserve Fund—Payments to Counties

Alters provisions relating to annual payments made to counties from the State Forest or Park Reserve Fund to require DNR to pay counties a specified percentage of the gross revenue derived from the State forest or park reserve located in the county. Passed House, crossed to Senate.

HB 1355/SB 382: Classification of State Forest and Park Ranger Supervisors

Authorizing specified employees of the State Forest and Park Service to choose to be transferred to the Natural Resources Police or to remain under the State Forest and Park Service. Appears to be languishing in both the House & the Senate.

HB 1086: Hunting—Closure of State Lands

Requiring DNR to keep land managed by the Department open for hunting unless the Department makes specified findings or except as required by law; requiring the Department to manage the land to support, promote, and enhance hunting opportunities to a specified extent; and requiring the Department to manage the land to prevent any net loss of acreage available for hunting opportunities on the land; Heard in Environmental Matters on March 4, no action as of press time.

HB 4 Land Preservation and State Asset Protection Act

More bills to deal with the tempest surrounding the potential sale of excess state lands, this bill establishes new procedures for the consideration and determination that land owned by the state is “excess” and can be sold. The bill alters the current process by requiring each unit of government to file a report every year listing real property that the unit considered to be in excess of the unit’s needs. Property must be listed even if it was not found to be in excess and forwarded to the appropriate office for sale proceedings. The bill requires the Department of State Government to notify the General Assembly whenever it determines land is in excess of needs and requires the state to conduct additional analysis that assesses the social, community and environmental value of property considered to be in excess of the needs of the state. The bill adds requirements to the way the Board of Public Works may approve of and dispose of land owned by the state. After being re-assigned, heard by House Environmental Matters and Appropriations on March 8.

HB 67 Disposition of Park Lands – General Assembly Approval Required

Again addresses the autumnal tempest, a constitutional amendment prohibiting the

Board of Public Works from approving the sale, lease, transfer, exchange, grant or other disposition of any state designated outdoor recreation, open space, conservation, preservation or other parkland without the express approval of the General Assembly. The Farm Bureau is opposing this bill due to concerns that this will prevent MALPF from releasing building lots from land subject to a preservation easement, even when the lots are available under the terms of the easement contract. MALPF considers up to 15 lot release applications per month under the terms of existing contracts, and Farm Bureau believes waiting for General Assembly consideration and approval may seriously delay the process for farm children who want to build homes on the farm. Heard on March 8, no action as of press time.

HB 903 – Land Preservation Retention Act

Dealing with the same issue, this bill sets up a new process for determining and selling “surplus” state land that was originally acquired in fee simple for conservation purposes. When considering whether or not to declare a property “surplus,” the bill requires DNR to notify legislators and adjacent landowners, hold public hearings and create a public record that includes the history and rationale for the original purchase. The bill establishes a similar process for the sale of property and mandates that conservation property be sold to local governments (if they are interested) for \$1.00 if the government agrees to keep the property for outdoor recreation or open space. Also heard on March 8, as of press time, no action.

HB 1533/SB 738 Land Preservation Programs – Funding

This bill must be in response to the raid of the program last year in order to balance the budget. The bill requires replacement of funds previously diverted. The payback

amount is tied to the budget surplus in a given year. The bill also requires future uses of transfer tax special funds to be done under very limited circumstances and with a defined payback plan. The Farm Bureau supports this bill. Heard in February, no action in House as of press time, but Senate will hear their version on March 23.

SB 293: Income Tax Credit for Preservation and Conservation Easements

Supported by Farm Bureau, this bill authorizes county governments to grant an income tax credit against county taxes for easement donations to MET and MALPF. Current law already allows a credit against state taxes. The county credit would only be available if a county government authorizes it and determines the amount of the credit. Under current law, the potential credit is calculated based on the fair market value of the easement minus any payment received for the easement.

HB 517; SB 294: Income Tax/Credit for Preservation and Conservation Easements/Refund

Makes the existing tax credit for the donation of easements to the Maryland Environmental Trust and the MALPF a "refundable" tax credit. The bill sets a credit limit of \$5,000 per year. Killed in House, stalled in Senate. The similar HB 532 appears to be stalled in the House.

SB 459/HB 1039: Income Tax Checkoff Cecil Co. Ag Preservation Fund

Supported by Farm Bureau, establishes a Cecil County Agricultural Preservation Fund for the purposes of preserving agricultural land and forest land in Cecil County and an income tax checkoff on the annual income tax return form dedicated to the fund. Heard March 15.

HB 1472: Exemption for Transfer to Brother/Sister in State Transfer Tax

This bill adds "brother or

sister" to the list of relatives to whom property can be transferred subject to a mortgage or deed of trust without paying recordation tax on the principal amount of debt assumed by the transferee. Supported by Farm Bureau, passed House on March 21, crossed over to Senate.

HB 121: St. Mary's Property Tax Credit for Age 70 +

Permits St. Mary's County to grant a property tax credit against the county property tax imposed on real property owned by an individual at least 70 years old; allows the county to decide the amount and the duration of the tax credit. Supported by Farm Bureau; heard March 16.

HB 1294 - Resource Conservation Planning Act of 2005

This bill would require government entities with planning and zoning authority (such as county governments) to develop, submit to the MD Department of Planning for review, and adopt land conservation plans for their respective jurisdictions. The land conservation plans are to include an inventory of conservation practices within the jurisdiction, a land conservation master plan, and resource conservation zoning equal to or more stringent than set forth in the bill. The bill defines resource conservation zoning as allowing for low-intensity uses that promote conservation of farmland and encourage agricultural activity. Any parcel less than 2 acres cannot be subdivided, parcels between 2 and 100 acres in size can be subdivided into no more than 2 lots, and parcels greater than 100 acres must be subdivided into 1 lot per 50 acres. The inventory of conservation practices must include the location and size of each parcel held in conservation through easements or in fee simple, the name of the easement owner or fee simple owner and the duration of the easement, and a map showing each parcel. These provisions

will take effect July 1, 2006 until July 1, 2015. The bill deletes language in MD Code providing for transfer tax revenue to go specifically to land conservation programs, and instead allocates that revenue as provided in the State Budget. The second part of the bill requires counties to develop energy conservation plans for public buildings. Applicable buildings include those containing over 10,000 ft of floor space, are 30 years old, owned by the county, and include public school buildings. The energy plan must include an inventory of applicable buildings, an energy efficiency evaluation chart, and an energy conservation master plan to be submitted to the MDP and reviewed in coordination with MEA. The Farm Bureau opposes HB1294, which was heard March 17.

HB 542/SB 438 Frederick County Ag and Education Complex

Authorizes the creation of state debt for a grant to be distributed to the Board of Supervisors of the Frederick County Soil Conservation District and the Board of Supervisors of the Catocin Soil Conservation District for the purpose of establishing an Agriculture and Education Complex in Frederick. The grant will be a matching fund of no more than \$300,000. Supported by Farm Bureau; to be heard March 21.

HB 1388/SB 943: Hunting Restrictions

Currently, Dorchester allows hunting on one Sunday during the bow season and one Sunday during the firearms season. This bill would make it legal to hunt deer on Sundays with a bow during open hunting season in October and November. To be heard March 23.

HB 1515 Mandatory Funding for Cooperative Extension

We like this bill, which is scheduled to be heard March 23 and requires the Governor to include at least the same

amount of money in the budget for the Cooperative Extension Service as was allocated in 2004, which will hopefully shield this stalwart education program from the vagaries of vogue education trends. Farm Bureau supports this bill.

HB 1594: Funding for MD Agricultural and Resource Based Industry Development Corp.

The bill requires the Governor to include at least \$4.5 million for MARBIDCO in the state budget during FY 2007 - FY 2016. MARBIDCO, which includes someone from the equine industry on its board, was created through legislation in 2004 to assist in the viability of the state's diverse agricultural industry through new markets development, capital and credit enhancements, and technical and other assistance to support, create, and sustain agricultural businesses throughout the state. Farm Bureau supports this bill, which will be heard March 23.

SB 973: Ag Limited Liability Entities - Homestead Tax Credit

Last year, the legislature passed a bill to extend the Homestead Tax Credit to Agricultural Limited Liability Companies. The principal residence and the associated home site (one acre) are eligible for the Homestead Tax Credit, which caps the assessment increase on that portion of the property to 10% or less per year and allows the homeowner to pay property taxes in semiannual installments. As of last year, there were approximately 375 farm properties that had become Limited Liability Companies to protect the owners from potential legal liability. This bill makes Agricultural Limited Liability Partnerships eligible as well. Farm Bureau supports SB 973, which is sponsored by horseman Sen. David Brinkley and will be heard in the Budget and taxation Committee on March 24.

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HB 74: Ag Preservation Easement Termination – County Notification

This bill, which is supported by the Farm Bureau, alters the timeline for a county government to notify the MD Agland Preservation Foundation of its recommendation in the case of a landowner who applies to have a MALPF easement terminated. The bill changes the current 30 day requirement to 90 days in order to allow the county sufficient time to consult its Ag Preservation Advisory Board, hold public hearings and have the issue considered by the county council or county commissioners. Easement termination requests are only available to landowners whose easement purchases were approved by the Board of Public Works prior to September 30, 2004 and have been held by MALPF for 25 years. All easements purchased after that date are permanent. Passed the House, crossed over to Senate, to be heard on March 25.

HB 576: Water Pollution Control – Cost Sharing

Supported by the Farm Bureau, this bill alters the cost-share program designed to help farmers install Best Management Practices on their farms (conservation practices that manage soil loss or nutrients, animal wastes or agricultural chemicals so as to minimize movement into surface waters). The cost-share program is administered through the Soil Conservation Districts in each county. The bill allows MDA to determine what amount of cost-share monies must be paid back if a BMP is no longer maintained. Under current law, the entire amount must be paid back, no matter how long the project was in place. Passed in the House, to be heard in Senate on March 25.

HB 78: MALPF – Local Land Use

This bill clarifies a county's authority to deny permits for projects on land under MALPF easement if the project is in violation of the ease-

ment. The bill allows the local government to deny approvals for subdivision plats or plans, building permits, conditional use or special exceptions or any other activity on MALPF easement land without the Foundation's approval. Passed in the House, to be heard in Senate on March 25.

HB 79: MALPF – Arbitration of Easement Values

Supported by Farm Bureau, this bill sets a deadline for requesting an appeal of an appraisal of land offered for easement sale to the MD Agland Preservation Foundation. If either the landowner or the Foundation do not agree on the value of the easement as determined by the State, either party must request the appeal by September 30th of the year following the determination of value. Passed in the House, to be heard in Senate on March 25.

Racing Bills

HB 516: Horse Racing Reform Act of 2005

Repealing the restriction relating to the time of day after which Thoroughbred racing may not be held; altering the authority of the Maryland Racing Commission to authorize telephone betting; altering specified distributions to overnight and stakes races; and requiring the Racing Commission to issue an annual report. Still in committee.

HB 632: State Lottery Proceeds for TB & SB State-Bred Funds

Establishing a special fund for the distribution of specified State Lottery proceeds to the Maryland-Bred (Thoroughbred) Race Fund and the Maryland Standardbred Race Fund; requiring the State Lottery Agency to conduct a number of special instant ticket games sufficient to generate at least \$6,000,000 for each fund. To be heard March 23.

HB 1029/SB 720: Purses—Pimlico Special and Rosecroft Raceway

Creating a special fund con-

sisting of specified revenues; requiring that money from the special fund be used for purses for the running of the Pimlico Special and for purses at Rosecroft Raceway; requiring that the funds be allocated by the Maryland Racing Commission in a specified manner. Still in committee on House side; heard March 17 in Senate Finance.

HB 230/SB 460: Racing at Fair Hill Takeout for Cecil Co. Breeders' Fair

Increasing the takeout to 25% that the Cecil County Breeders' Fair, Inc., or its successor must deduct from the handle for races held at the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area. Heard March 2 in House Ways & Means; March 17 in Senate Finance.

SB 498: State Racing Commission Reorganization Act

Abolishes the State Racing Commission, which oversees both flat track (Thoroughbred) and harness (Standardbred) racing, establishing in its stead separate commissions for each sport. Heard March 17

Update on Bills Reported On, March Equiery

See www.equiery.com for March 05 legislative report under News & Views.

HB 76: Animal Health—Administrative Penalties

Allows MDA to impose financial penalties of up to \$10,000 on anyone found guilty of violating health regulations for livestock. Fines go to the General Funds (which helps to ensure that agencies don't start looking for violations just to enrich their own coffers). Passed in the House, to be heard in Senate on March 25. MD Farm Bureau supports.

HB 77: Commercial Feed and Fertilizer, Agricultural Liming Materials, and Pesticide Registration and Labeling Laws—Penalties

Allows MDA to fine any

feed, fertilizer, liming or pesticide business not complying with the laws to register and/or properly label said product. In the past, the best MDA could do was to refuse to register the product, which really doesn't seem like much of a threat to a business already not complying. Again, fines would go to the General Fund. Passed in the House, to be heard in Senate on March 25.

HB 104: Animal Health—Reports

Requires that MDA maintain the privacy of the identity of the owners of animals in regards to their health reports, but which would also authorize the Department, vis-à-vis the Secretary, to disclose that identity when deemed in the interest of public health or for the necessity of preventing the spread of disease. Passed in the House, to be heard in Senate on March 25. Farm Bureau supports.

HB 555/SB 446: Horse Industry Board Program Evaluation

The good news is that the changes requested by *The Equiery*, the Maryland Horse Council and the Maryland Horse Industry Board were made in the Senate version, and the bills passed the Senate. Oddly, the Senate also added some strong signage requirements for the display of the stable license number. As of press time, we were not able to ascertain the origin of those signage requirements. The House version has not left committee, but the amended Senate version has crossed over to the House.

HB 594: Making it a Crime to Interfere with, Injure, or Kill Service Animals (Langer's Law)

Would heighten the penalties and classify them as crimes, rather than misdemeanors, for actions against animals used in handicap programs, or as seeing eye dogs (or ponies), in a way that goes above and beyond the felony charges for aggravated cruelty. Bill received an unfavorable report on March 14.

HB 721: Prohibitions Against The Improper Transport of Horses

Although a good idea and a well meaning bill (to ban the transportation of horses using double decker (a.k.a. opossum bellied) livestock trailers, this bill was unfortunately fraught with bad language (and we don't mean four letter words). Thankfully, the bill was killed, and it will go back, get re-tooled and be reintroduced next year.

HB 1173: Changes to the DNR Wildlife Advisory Commission

Would double the number of representatives from each interest group (farming, commercial watermen), hunters, environmental conservation and/or wildlife protection) and add one member that holds a doctoral degree in wildlife biology or related field. This is the committee that advises on issues related to foxchasing (on public or private land, as DNR is responsible for all wildlife, regardless of location). Heard on March 11, no action since.

HB 1330: Ratcheting Up Penalties for Aggravated Cruelty to Animals

Increase the punishment for cruelty that results in death, upping the potential jail time from three years to five and the fines from \$3,000 to \$10,000. Passed House, crossed over to Senate.

SB 391: Criminal Law—Intentional Infliction of Harm on Law Enforcement Animals—Repeal

Received an unfavorable report.

HB 332/SB 54: Anne Arundel County—YMCA Camp Letts

Funding for improvements to YMCA Camp Letts, which also offers lessons and rentals of horses, appears stalled in committee.

HB 561/SB 325: Ag Preservation—Termination of Agricultural Districts

Authorizing the termination of an agricultural district after at least 30 months and before 5 years have elapsed if

MALPF has not purchased an agricultural easement on the property and the landowner provides notice to the Foundation at least 30 days before the termination. Killed in both the House and the Senate.

HB 842: Land Valuation State Property Tax

Establishing separate classes for property tax purposes for land and improvements to land; establishing a new subclass of land for land that is used a principal place of residence; exempting improvements to land from the State property tax, with specified exceptions; exempting from the State property tax the first \$15,000 of value of agricultural land and the first \$40,000 of value of land used as a principal place of residence. Stalled.

HB 904: Land Preservation Protection Act

Essentially, this bill requires the Governor to pay back the money he borrowed from the transfer tax fund (which supports land preservation programs) to balance the budget. Farm Bureau supports this bill. Appears to be stalled.

HB 933 MALPF—Request for Release by Landowner's Estate

Requiring MALPF, upon written application submitted by the estate of a deceased landowner whose land is subject to an agricultural easement and within 1 year after the death of the landowner, to release free of easement restrictions specified lots under specified circumstances. Dead.

HB 934 MALPF Child Lot—Notice

Requiring, as a condition for the release of a lot, free of easement restrictions by MALPF that the landowner disclose to the Foundation, at the time of settlement of the purchase of the easement and on a form supplied by the Foundation, that the landowner will be seeking the release of a lot for that child. Dead.

HB 1334 Critical Farms Program

Requiring MALPF and the Department of Planning to establish a Critical Farms Program to provide interim or emergency financing for the acquisition of specified agricultural preservation easements on specified farms. Passed House, no action yet in Senate.

SB 306 Board of Public Works—Disposition of Protected Lands

Prohibits Public Works from approving the sale, lease, transfer, exchange, grant, or other disposition of any State-owned or State-designated outdoor recreation, open space, conservation, preservation, forest, or other park land; authorizing the General Assembly to take action by passing legislation with regard to specified land transactions; requiring the Board to cause a specified notice to be published; requiring specified departments to prepare specified analyses; etc. Appears stalled.

MAILBAG

Hi there! Just to let you know, that the ads for riding instructor and therapist really generated a lot of interest. I had so many calls and emails. I hired two fantastic people to fill the positions. So, keep up the good work!! Equiery has a very broad reader-base.

Helen Tuel
Therapeutic & Recreational Riding Center, Glenwood

Got *The Equiery* yesterday, and I just enjoy the heck out of reading it! It's obvious the quality and amount of effort that goes into each issue. Where else would we even know about the legislative activities governing horses, agriculture and the Bay? Thank you so much for the service you guys provide horsemen.

My best always,
Leslie Miller Bertram

Just discovered your [web]site ...fabulous, indeed!
I whipped at GSVH [Green

Spring Valley Hounds] in '72, and your site brought back fond memories of Maryland in the springtime. Well done.

Howard McDowell

To All Of Our Readers:

When we are in the deep dark recesses of cramming to get to press, your encouraging notes are extremely inspiring. Thank you!

—Ed

HB1055

We need to make sure that any action that council takes will maintain rural skylines with things like barns and silos and windmills by containing language exempting these structures for direct agricultural uses. This kind of language seems to have worked well for our group.

Unfortunately, I have had quite an education about towers as they relate to Land Use issues in Montgomery County.

I am president of a community corporation—Damascus Residents for Responsible Tower Siting, Inc., www.dratinfo.com. We have spent the last ten years (so far, successfully) preventing two AM radio stations from relocating seven 440' broadcasting towers in Damascus.

Our group helped to draft the legislation in Montgomery County that provides for the 199' tower height restriction and ensuring that it applied to Broadcast Towers, and we drafted language incorporated into the Damascus Master Plan with MNPPC that speaks to maintaining rural vistas. Both these tools will be useful for those in the agricultural community.

We need to ensure that council helps us keep our skylines rural.

Pamela Bussard
Damascus

Many thanks to Maryland Farm Bureau for their legislative hotline.