

HOUSE BILL 1063

M4

7lr0301

By: **Delegates Stein, Healey, Lafferty, Morhaim, Platt, and Robinson**

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2017

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 8, 2017

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Agriculture – Maryland Healthy Soils Program**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Healthy Soils Program for certain purposes;
4 requiring the Department of Agriculture to provide certain incentives to farmers to
5 implement certain farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils;
6 requiring the Department to determine whether the Program may be implemented
7 in a manner to enhance other certain programs; defining certain terms; and
8 generally relating to the Maryland Healthy Soils Program.

9 BY adding to

10 Article – Agriculture

11 Section 2–1901 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 19. Maryland Healthy Soils
12 Program”

13 Annotated Code of Maryland

14 (2016 Replacement Volume)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Agriculture**

18 **SUBTITLE 19. MARYLAND HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM.**

19 **2–1901.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (A) (1) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
2 INDICATED.

3 (2) "HEALTHY SOILS" MEANS THE CONTINUING CAPACITY OF SOIL
4 TO:

5 (I) FUNCTION AS A BIOLOGICAL SYSTEM;

6 (II) INCREASE SOIL ORGANIC MATTER;

7 (III) IMPROVE SOIL STRUCTURE AND WATER AND NUTRIENT
8 HOLDING CAPACITY; AND

9 (IV) SEQUESTER CARBON AND REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS
10 EMISSIONS.

11 (3) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE MARYLAND HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM.

12 (B) THERE IS A MARYLAND HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM.

13 (C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO:

14 (1) IMPROVE THE HEALTH, YIELD, AND PROFITABILITY OF THE SOILS
15 OF THE STATE;

16 (2) INCREASE ~~THE~~ BIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION
17 ~~CAPABILITY OF~~ SEQUESTRATION IN THE SOILS OF THE STATE BY PROMOTING
18 PRACTICES BASED ON EMERGING SOIL SCIENCE, INCLUDING PLANTING MIXED
19 COVER CROPS, ADOPTING NO-TILL OR LOW-TILL FARMING PRACTICES, AND
20 ROTATION GRAZING; AND

21 (3) PROMOTE ~~MORE~~ WIDESPREAD USE OF HEALTHY SOILS
22 PRACTICES AMONG FARMERS IN THE STATE.

23 (D) TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM, THE DEPARTMENT
24 SHALL:

25 (1) PROVIDE INCENTIVES, INCLUDING RESEARCH, EDUCATION,
26 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE FUNDING, FINANCIAL
27 ASSISTANCE, TO FARMERS TO IMPLEMENT FARM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES THAT
28 CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTHY SOILS; AND

1 **(2) DETERMINE WHETHER THE PROGRAM MAY BE IMPLEMENTED IN**
2 **A MANNER TO ENHANCE OTHER STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE**
3 **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS.**

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
5 October 1, 2017.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.