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Date: February 13, 2023
To: Members of the House Committee on Economic Matters
From: Holly Porter, Executive Director
Re: HB 0473 – Ambient Air Monitoring – Particulate and Fine Particulate Matter – LETTER OF INFORMATION

The Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) is the 1,600-member trade association representing the meat-chicken growers, processing companies, and allied business members on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and Delaware. We would like to submit to this committee a brief letter of information which we feel may be useful in their consideration of HB 0473.

In 2020 the Delmarva Chicken Association, in a public-private partnership with the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment and the Maryland Department of the Environment, began The Lower Eastern Shore Air Monitoring Project overseen by MDE. The idea for this project was proposed by DCA in response to many baseless claims that poultry farms contributed to lower air quality for citizens in the surrounding areas. Suspicious of these claims, we wanted to find out for ourselves if there was any merit to them, and if so, find out how we could change our practices as an industry, if it was warranted. Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) and the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment jointly supported the effort with more than \$500,000 in funds. MDE, along with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore is responsible for collecting and publishing the data gathered by the project on a publicly available website, which is ongoing.

The Lower Eastern Shore Air Monitoring Project began collecting continuous data about ammonia, fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), and coarse particulate matter (PM 10) in April 2020 at locations in Princess Anne (designated a low poultry operation density site), Pocomoke City (designated a high poultry operation density site), and an urban Maryland location not on the Eastern Shore with no nearby poultry operations.

The Pocomoke City site, with a high density of poultry operations, saw lower maximum hourly values for each pollutant than the Princess Anne site, with a comparatively lower density of nearby poultry farms. Days when maximum hourly values were recorded in Princess Anne, the low poultry operation density site, coincide with days when commercial fertilizer (which contains nitrogen, the solid form of ammonia) was applied to cropland in the area around the monitoring site. None of the recorded ammonia hourly value spikes at any site have exceeded the 350 parts per billion concern threshold, and the values recorded by MDE during the Lower Eastern Shore Air Monitoring Project are consistent with values recorded throughout the state.

We believe that further air monitoring across the state will continue to prove that there is no correlation between poultry farms and lower air quality, and therefore we welcome further expansion. However, at the time of submitting this letter, there is still no fiscal note for this legislation. The potential expense of this project to the Maryland taxpayer should warrant serious consideration by this body. While we cannot give even approximate estimates for a project whose scope cannot yet be clearly defined, we can



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give some figures from our own project so that this committee can have a better understanding of the costs associated with widespread ambient air monitoring.

In 2019, it cost approximately \$113,000 just to retrofit two existing air monitoring stations so that they could measure ammonia. In 2020, the installation of just two air monitoring stations, which measured ammonia, PM 2.5, and PM 10, (the latter two of which are expressly stipulated in this legislation) costs approximately \$380,000. Given the amount of census tracts which may meet the Maryland standard of overburdened and/or underserved, and the density of the air monitoring stations stipulated in this legislation, the cost for this project would be well into the millions, if not tens of millions of dollars.

Below is the link to the Eastern Shore Air Monitoring Project, with comprehensive real time data and summaries to date:

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/AirQualityMonitoring/Pages/Lower-Eastern-Shore-Monitoring-Project.aspx>

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at porter@dcachicken.com or 302-222-4069 or Grayson Middleton at middleton@dcahicken.com or 410-490-3329.

Sincerely,

Holly Porter
Executive Director