



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

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

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building  
50 Harry S Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
mda.maryland.gov

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410.841.5885 Baltimore/Washington  
410.841.5846 Fax

## Maryland Department of Agriculture Legislative Comment Date: January 10, 2025

**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Bill 203  
**SHORT TITLE:** Vehicle Laws - Exceptional Hauling Permits for Farm Products  
**MDA POSITION:** Support

### Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

**SB 203** simplifies and modernizes regulation of transportation of farm products to processors and markets. The hauling of agricultural products is an essential part of the success of farmers and the companies which process bulk agriculture commodities and supports the supply chain of the industry. The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) supports this legislation.

This will make Maryland more competitive with neighboring states. The current weight limit in Maryland is 87,000 maximum gross pounds with tolerance on six axles. In Virginia, it is 90,000 pounds with 5 axles. In Delaware, it is 90,000 pounds with five or more axles. And, in Pennsylvania the maximum is 95,000 pounds with five axles or 107,000 pounds with six axles. The expansion of the maximum to 88,000 pounds with five axles in Maryland will make a significant difference for the agricultural industry, resulting in fewer truckloads for certain products and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from that reduction in truckloads.

This will benefit at least 129 truckers who are hauling raw milk from the state's 287 dairy farms to processing plants in the state. This legislation simplifies regulation of vehicles carrying fluid milk and other agricultural products. The Governor's Dairy Advisory Council for a number of years emphasized the importance of milk hauling in a viable dairy sector in the state, for example. Dairy farms in Maryland produced 846 million pounds of milk in 2023, a fresh perishable product that needs to be hauled to processors daily.

Other products, such as sweet corn and green beans, are routinely hauled from farms to canneries and frozen food processors. In total, Maryland farms produce more than \$3.3 billion in products that all need to be transported from locations throughout the state. The primary benefactors will be the dairy, grain, forestry, and poultry industries. MDA requests your consideration of a favorable report for SB 203.

If you have additional questions, please contact Rachel Jones, MDA Director of Government Relations at [Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov](mailto:Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov) or (667) 408-0134.