

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

A BILL ENTITLED

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.**

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

22 (2) “HEALTHY SOILS” MEANS THE CONTINUING CAPACITY OF SOIL
23 TO:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



- 1 **(I) FUNCTION AS A BIOLOGICAL SYSTEM;**
2 **(II) INCREASE SOIL ORGANIC MATTER;**
3 **(III) IMPROVE SOIL STRUCTURE AND WATER AND NUTRIENT**
4 **HOLDING CAPACITY; AND**
5 **(IV) SEQUESTER CARBON AND REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS**
6 **EMISSIONS.**

7 **(3) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE MARYLAND HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM.**

8 **(B) THERE IS A MARYLAND HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM.**

9 **(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO:**

10 **(1) IMPROVE THE HEALTH, YIELD, AND PROFITABILITY OF THE SOILS**
11 **OF THE STATE;**

12 **(2) INCREASE THE CARBON SEQUESTRIAN CAPABILITY OF THE SOILS**
13 **OF THE STATE; AND**

14 **(3) PROMOTE MORE WIDESPREAD USE OF HEALTHY SOILS**
15 **PRACTICES AMONG FARMERS IN THE STATE.**

16 **(D) TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM, THE DEPARTMENT**
17 **SHALL:**

18 **(1) PROVIDE INCENTIVES, INCLUDING RESEARCH, EDUCATION,**
19 **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE FUNDING, FINANCIAL**
20 **ASSISTANCE, TO FARMERS TO IMPLEMENT FARM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES THAT**
21 **CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTHY SOILS; AND**

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

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