

Chapter 43

(House Bill 262)

AN ACT concerning

Department of Agriculture – Maryland Agricultural Commission and Young Farmers

FOR the purpose of altering the membership of the Maryland Agricultural Commission; establishing the Committee on Young Farmers for certain purposes, including to communicate to the Maryland Agricultural Commission on certain matters relating to young farmers in the State; repealing the provisions of law establishing and governing the Young Farmers Advisory Board; and generally relating to the Maryland Agricultural Commission and young farmers in the State.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Agriculture

Section 2–201, 2–202, ~~and~~ 2–203(a) and (c), and 2–503(a)(1)(ii)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2016 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Agriculture

Section 2–206

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2016 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Agriculture

Section 2–503(a)(1)(iii)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2016 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing

Article – Agriculture

Section 2–1001 through 2–1005 and the subtitle “Subtitle 10. Young Farmers Advisory Board”

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2016 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Agriculture

2–201.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE, “COMMISSION” MEANS THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION ESTABLISHED UNDER § 2–202 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

(B) It is the intent of the General Assembly in the enactment of this subtitle to provide for a broadened representation in policy determinations with regard to agricultural matters in the State.

2–202.

(A) There is a Maryland Agricultural Commission in the Department.

(B) **[It]** **THE COMMISSION** shall formulate and make proposals for the advancement of Maryland agriculture by serving as an advisory body to the Secretary on matters pertaining to agriculture.

2–203.

(a) The Commission **[has 31 members.]** **CONSISTS OF:**

(1) One member **WHO** is ex officio and is the principal administrative official for agricultural affairs at the University System of Maryland as designated by the Chancellor of the University~~];~~ **AND**

(2) The **[Governor appoints the remaining 30 members as follows]** **FOLLOWING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:**

[(1)] (I) **[Two from a list of at least four nominees representing]** **ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF** the dairy industry;

[(2)] (II) **[Two from a list of at least four nominees representing]** **ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF** the poultry industry;

[(3)] (III) One **[from a list of at least two nominees representing]** **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the livestock industry;

[(4)] One from a list of at least two nominees representing the tobacco industry;]

[(5)] (IV) **[Two from a list of at least four nominees representing]** **ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF** the **[nursery]** **NURSERY, LANDSCAPE, AND GREENHOUSE** industry;

[(6)] (V) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the [horticulture] **FRUIT** industry;

[(7)] (VI) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the field crops industry;

[(8)] (VII) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the vegetable industry;

[(9)] (VIII) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the veterinary profession;

[(10)] (IX) One [from a list of at least two nominees] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the Maryland State Grange;

[(11)] (X) One [from a list of at least two nominees] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the Maryland Farm Bureau;

[(12)] (XI) [Two without nomination appointed at large from] **ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF** services related to agriculture;

[(13)] (XII) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the turf industry;

[(14)] (XIII) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing the horse-breeding] **REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EQUINE** industry;

[(15)] (XIV) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the food processing industry;

[(16)] (XV) One [without nomination appointed at large from] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the general public to be the consumer member;

[(17)] (XVI) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** the organic farming industry;

[(18)] (XVII) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** direct farm marketing;

[(19)] (XVIII) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** viticulture;

[(20)] (XIX) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] **REPRESENTATIVE OF** agriculture education in primary or secondary schools;

[(21)] (XX) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] REPRESENTATIVE OF agri–business;

[(22)] (XXI) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] REPRESENTATIVE OF the forestry industry;

[(23)] (XXII) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] REPRESENTATIVE OF the aquaculture industry;

[(24)] (XXIII) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing agri–tourism] REPRESENTATIVE OF VALUE–ADDED AGRICULTURE AND AGRITOURISM;

[(25)] (XXIV) One [from a list of two nominees representing] REPRESENTATIVE OF the biofuel industry; [and]

[(26)] (XXV) One [from a list of at least two nominees representing] REPRESENTATIVE OF the hemp industry;

(XXVI) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTAL AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY;

(XXVII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS;

(XXVIII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF VETERAN FARMERS;

(XXIX) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMITTEE ON YOUNG FARMERS;

**(XXX) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF URBAN AND SMALL FARMERS;
AND**

(XXXI) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS.

(c) (1) The term of membership is 3 years.

(2) A person may not serve more than two consecutive terms. [Members of the Commission appointed before January 1, 1973, may continue to serve until the expiration of their terms. New appointments shall be made from nominees of the industry, profession, or organization represented by the member whose term is expiring.]

2-206.

(A) IN THIS SECTION, “COMMITTEE” MEANS THE COMMITTEE ON YOUNG FARMERS.

(B) THERE IS A COMMITTEE ON YOUNG FARMERS.

(C) (1) THE COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF 10 MEMBERS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY IN CONSULTATION WITH THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION.

(2) (I) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THE SECRETARY SHALL DESIGNATE THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.

(II) A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE THAT IS APPOINTED AS A MEMBER OF THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MAY CONTINUE TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE UNTIL THE EXPIRATION OF THEIR TERM ON THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION.

(D) (1) EACH MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE SHALL:

(I) BE INTERESTED IN THE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MARYLAND AGRICULTURE;

(II) DERIVE AT LEAST 50% OF THE MEMBER’S PERSONAL INCOME FROM FARMING OR AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE STATE;

(III) BE A RESIDENT OF THE STATE; AND

(IV) BE UNDER THE AGE OF 45 YEARS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEMBER’S TERM.

(2) TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE SHALL REPRESENT REGIONAL DIVERSITY AND A VARIETY OF INDUSTRIES.

(E) THE COMMITTEE SHALL:

(1) COMMUNICATE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, STATE GOVERNMENT, AND THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS TO AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE;

(2) IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS ISSUES RELATING TO YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS IN THE STATE AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION; AND

(3) HOLD MEETINGS AT LEAST ONCE DURING EACH CALENDAR QUARTER OF THE YEAR.

(F) A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE:

(1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION; BUT

(2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

(G) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE STAFF FOR THE COMMITTEE.

2-503.

(a) (1) The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation shall be governed and administered by a board of trustees composed of:

(ii) Nine members from the State at-large to be appointed by the Governor, at least six of whom shall be farmer representatives who are engaged in or retired from active farming from different areas of the State, and four of whom shall be appointed as follows:

1. One from a list of three nominees submitted by the Maryland Agricultural Commission;

2. One from a list of three nominees submitted by the Maryland Farm Bureau;

3. One from a list of three nominees submitted by the Maryland State Grange; and

4. One from a list of three nominees submitted by the COMMITTEE ON Young Farmers [Advisory Board]; and

(iii) Any designee appointed by an ex officio member under paragraph (3) of this subsection.

[Subtitle 10. Young Farmers Advisory Board.]

[2-1001.

There is a Young Farmers Advisory Board in the Department.】

[2-1002.

(a) The Young Farmers Advisory Board shall consist of 20 members appointed by the Governor.

(b) Of the 20 members:

- (1) 1 shall be from the Department of Agriculture;
- (2) 1 shall be from the Department of Economic Competitiveness and Commerce;
- (3) 1 shall be from the Forestry Program within the Department of Natural Resources;
- (4) 1 shall be an officer of the Maryland FFA Association;
- (5) 1 shall be an urban farmer;
- (6) 1 shall be from the Maryland Farm Bureau; and
- (7) 14 shall be appointed from the general public.

(c) To the extent practicable, the Governor shall attempt to ensure regional diversity among the members of the Advisory Board appointed from the general public.

(d) Each member from the general public shall:

- (1) Be interested in the preservation and development of agriculture and preservation of the agricultural way of life in Maryland;
- (2) Be under the age of 45 years at the beginning of the member's term;
- (3) Derive at least 50% of the member's personal income from farming or agricultural activities in the State; and
- (4) Be a resident of the State.

(e) (1) Except for the initial terms of the Advisory Board, the term of a member shall be 3 years.

(2) (i) The terms of members are staggered as required by the terms provided for members of the Advisory Board on October 1, 2004.

(ii) The terms of the initial members shall be staggered evenly between 2 years and 3 years as the Advisory Board shall determine at the Board's first meeting.]

[2-1003.

The Advisory Board shall:

(1) Annually elect from its members a chairperson, a vice chairperson, and a secretary of the Advisory Board at the Advisory Board's first meeting of the calendar year;

(2) Communicate to the general public, the federal government, the State government, and Maryland Agricultural Commission the importance of young and beginning farmers to agriculture in the State;

(3) Identify and address issues relating to young and beginning farmers in the State and make recommendations to the Maryland Agricultural Commission;

(4) Establish committees, as necessary, to develop projects relating to the aspects of life for young and beginning farmers in the State;

(5) Hold meetings at least once during each calendar quarter of the year;
and

(6) Adopt a mission statement and administrative procedures to implement this subtitle.]

[2-1004.

(a) A member of the Advisory Board:

(1) May not receive compensation; but

(2) Is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(b) The Department shall provide staff for the Advisory Board.]

[2-1005.

The chairperson, or the chairperson's designee, shall:

(1) Attend meetings of the Maryland Agricultural Commission; and

(2) Provide a quarterly report to the Maryland Agricultural Commission.]

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor, April 8, 2025.