



February 25, 2020

To: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

From: MidAtlantic Farm Credit

Bill: **SB 964 – Agriculture – Hemp Research and Production - Prohibitions**

Position: **Oppose**

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MidAtlantic Farm Credit is a member-owned cooperative supporting rural communities and agriculture with reliable, consistent credit and financial services in good times and bad. Headquartered in Westminster, MD, we are one of the largest agricultural lenders on the East Coast with almost \$2.9 billion dollars in loans outstanding to over 11,500 member-owners representing the full range of agriculture throughout our five-state territory.

This bill would prohibit the Maryland Department of Agriculture from certifying or registering a site or issuing a permit to grow hemp on a farm that is within 2 miles of a residential community of 10 or more residences.

This measure, if passed, could set multiple precedents unnerving to Maryland's agriculture community. Establishing in statute the distance a producer must be from a 10-house subdivision in order to grow hemp will put existing growers – Maryland taxpayers that have invested time, sweat, property, and money – out of compliance through no faulty action of their own and infringe on their Right to Farm. At the same time, it could artificially restrict someone from utilizing their land to produce this legal crop in the future. Additionally, this bill would supersede local planning and zoning laws, effectively dictating property line setbacks without doing so through traditional channels like the comprehensive planning process or a local text amendment.

In an effort to ensure the ability of Maryland farmers to productively engage in the growing of current and future legal agricultural crops and livestock, MidAtlantic Farm Credit respectfully urges an **Unfavorable** report for **SB 964**.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurt Fuchs". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

KURT H. FUCHS  
SVP, Government Affairs

*For more information, please contact Kurt Fuchs at 443-786-0855 or [kfuchs@mafrc.com](mailto:kfuchs@mafrc.com).*