



Maryland Grain Producers Association  
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## **HB 1312 - Water Pollution Control - Discharge Permits - Industrial Poultry Operations**

Committee: E&T

Date: March 4, 2020

MGPA Position: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Grain Producers Association serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. We would like to express our opposition to House Bill 1312 which would have an extremely negative impact on Maryland's vibrant poultry economy which supports and enables Maryland farmers to profitably grow grain.

This bill prohibits the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) from issuing or extending a discharge permit to a person to an industrial poultry operation on or before September 30, 2020. An "industrial poultry operation" is an animal feeding operation (AFO) that produces 300,000 or more broiler chickens annually and includes two or more poultry operations that are under common ownership or control if the distance between the two operations is within three miles.

Poultry farms consume the vast majority of corn, wheat, and soybeans produced in Maryland. This creates a sustainable, local market with a low carbon footprint for the production of grain and poultry. Additionally, we are located in a large consumer market where the poultry can be easily processed and consumed locally.

The fiscal analysis states that this bill will have a "meaningful negative impact on affected farms" and that it will lead to a gradual decline in the poultry industry on the Eastern Shore, which would not only have effects on affected poultry operations, but also on grain farmers and other small businesses that rely on the poultry industry for business.

This bill targets family farms and arbitrarily defines them as "industrial poultry operations" and will hurt Maryland grain farmers in the process.

We respectfully ask for your unfavorable report on House Bill 1312.