



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education

## Senate Bill 344

Agriculture – Cost-Sharing Program – State Cost-Sharing Funds

Date: March 24, 2021

Position: **SUPPORT AS AMENDED**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Robin Jessica Clark, MD Staff Attorney

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS SB 344 AS AMENDED** which increases the rate of cost share funds from 87.5 % of eligible costs to 100% of eligible costs for certain conservation practices.

### **SB 344 Will Allow the Department to Fund a Greater Share of Funding on Certain Agricultural Projects**

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation opposed SB 344 in the Senate, but dropped opposition following clarification by Maryland Department of Agriculture and the addition of a sunset amendment. The Department of Agriculture shared that there are certain practices that they intend to fund at up to 100% state share. CBF finds these practices to be worthy of additional funding as they are relatively cost-effective water quality practices.

While not enumerated in the legislation, the Department provided correspondence to the effect that the practices funded at up to 100% state share will be limited to the following:

Structure for Water Control	Riparian Herbaceous Cover	Silvopasture
Saturated Buffer	Filter Strip	Hedgerows
Denitrifying Bioreactor	Grassed Waterway	Windbreak
Subsurface Drain	Conservation Cover	Tree/Shrub establishment
Riparian Forest Buffer	Critical Area Planting	Wetland Restoration
Field Border	Pasture Management	Wetland Creation

### **A Sunset of the Legislation in 2025 Will Require Evaluation of Progress Toward the 2025 Blueprint Goals and Review of Funding Policy**

We hope and understand that the Department uses this new funding discretion to achieve progress towards the goals of the 2025 Blueprint. On that basis, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee adopted an amendment limiting the additional cost-share leniency until 2025, at which point progress toward the agricultural sector's reduction could be evaluated and form the basis for a new funding policy.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 344 AS AMENDED.** For more information, contact Robin J. Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at [rclark@cbf.org](mailto:rclark@cbf.org) and 443.995.8753.

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*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*