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Date: February 10, 2021

House Bill 507 – Clean Water Commerce Act of 2021
Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

MGPA Position: SUPPORT with Amendments

The Maryland Grain Producers Association serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. On an annual basis, nearly a million acres of these crops are grown in Maryland.

House Bill 507 Extends the existing Clean Water Commerce Act, which sunsets 6/1/21, through 2030 and provides \$20 million annually from the Bay Restoration Fund, managed in a new “Clean Water Commerce Fund.” Funding decisions under this program are made through a transparent, competitive procurement process and all sectors can apply.

Previously, agriculture was not eligible as a sector for CWCA funding. This bill sets aside 35% of funding for agricultural practices to be reassessed in 2025. Agriculture is responsible for the majority of planned nutrient reductions between now and 2025 to meet Maryland’s Watershed Implementation Plan III goals and additional funding will be absolutely essential to meet these goals.

All projects funded through the CWCA must have verifiable reductions for at least 10 years. For agriculture, this means that practices such as buffer and tree plantings, agricultural drainage and ditch management, wetland and stream restoration, and other more permanent practices will be eligible which have the potential to improve both water quality and agricultural production.

MGPA participated on the stakeholder group hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Commission to build consensus around the sponsor amendments presented.

MGPA respectfully submits our support with sponsor amendments position on HB507.