



March 24, 2021

The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chairman
House Environment & Transportation Committee

Re: Senate Bill 344 - Agriculture - Cost-Sharing Program - State Cost-Sharing Funds

Position: *Support*

Chairman Barve & Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts to express our *support* for Senate Bill 344, Agriculture - Cost-Sharing Program - State Cost-Sharing Funds. This bill increases the total percentage of eligible costs, 87.5% to 100%, for which State cost-sharing funds, administered through the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) program, may be made available for projects that control or prevent nonpoint source water pollution.

Under the purview of the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), the MACS program has provided farmers across the state with financial assistance to implement best management practices (BMPs) on their farms. The gap in cost-sharing funds has been a significant deterrent for smaller farms across Maryland to participate in the program. By increasing the program's percentage, it will allow these smaller farms across Maryland to participate in the program and will further identify and combat nonpoint source water pollution.

As a supporter of the MACS program under MDA, I respectfully request a *favorable* report of Senate Bill 344, which shows your dedicated support to the entire agricultural community and a healthier Chesapeake Bay. Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Nelson, Executive Director
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts