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House Bill 562 - Consumer Protection - Right to Repair - Farm Equipment

Committee: Environment and Transportation

MGPA Position: **SUPPORT**

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 562 would require an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to make available documentation, parts, and tools) to an independent repair provider (or owner) of farm equipment to allow for the diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of the farm equipment. This bill pertains only to farm equipment.

This bill **does not:**

- Require the equipment manufacturer to divulge any trade secrets to third party farm equipment repair providers.
- Allow farmers or third-party farm equipment repair providers to override emissions or safety features of farm equipment.
- Impact right-to-repair anything other than farm equipment.
- Require manufacturers to give third-parties access without compensation.

Maryland grain farmers currently rely almost exclusively on the network of equipment manufacturer affiliated dealers to service and repair their equipment. One of the largest equipment manufacturers have eleven of these dealers across the entire state. To put that into perspective, there are approximately 1,600 auto body repair shops across the state and that is just those authorized to do Maryland state safety inspections; there are many more able to work on nearly any make and model of passenger vehicle.

The saying is “farming doesn’t wait.” When conditions are right to plant or harvest crops, delays caused by equipment breakdowns and delays in availability of service cause significant financial losses for farmers. Maryland grain farmers have experienced the compounded issues of part availability, retailer consolidation and lack of labor causing increasing delays in service and equipment repair.

Equipment manufacturer retailer consolidation has increased over the last several years to the point some farmers must rely of service technicians 2-3 hours away to repair their combines and other farm equipment. This has caused delays up to two weeks for some farmers which is simply not workable during harvest.

Farmers are simply asking for the same options consumers have for personal and third-aprty repair of their passenger vehicles and arguably have more financial risk at stake when repair is not readily available.

MGPA respectfully asks for a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 562.

House Bill 562

Consumer Protection - Right to Repair - Farm Equipment

What this bill does:

- Gives farmers choice in farm equipment repair services
- Increases access to and availability of farm equipment repair services for farmers
- Defines authorized and independent repair providers
 - Requires that tools, parts and documentation to repair farm equipment are provided to third-party repair providers on “fair and reasonable terms”



What the bill does not do:

- Require the equipment manufacturer to divulge any trade secrets to third party farm equipment repair providers
- Allow farmers or third-party farm equipment repair providers to override emissions or safety features of farm equipment
- Impact right-to-repair anything other than farm equipment
- Require manufacturers to give third-parties access without compensation

