

# **Support of SB 866 - Special Vehicle Registration P**

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FAV



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 30, 2023

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of SB 866 - Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 866. This bill requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill beginning in fiscal year 2025 an appropriation for the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc. that is calculated based on the amount of revenue lost if/when special vehicle registration plates are created.

Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation (MAEF) receives funding from the sale and registration of the Ag tags. The Chesapeake Bay Trust also receives funding from the Bay tag. Currently, these are the only two special vehicle registration plates. If there were to be more plates created, the fund source would go down because of the added type of plates. This bill seeks to make sure MAEF and CBT receive level funding if their revenue from the plate sales go down. Even though our policy opposes any new commemorative license plates, we see this solution being one that we can support if new plates were approved and created.

**MDFB Policy:** We support the Maryland Ag Tag, and we believe that all fees derived from sales should continue to be used to support MAEF.

We oppose increasing the number of commemorative license plates beyond the Maryland Ag Tag and Chesapeake Bay Tag.

**MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 866 AND REQUEST A FAVORABLE REPORT**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson".

Colby Ferguson  
Director of Government Relations

*For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396*

# **SB866 - FAV - Nature Forward - March 28th House EN**

Uploaded by: Denisse Guitarra

Position: FAV

March 28, 2023

**Written testimony for SB866 - Special Vehicle Registration Plates -  
Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education  
Foundation - Appropriation <sup>1</sup>**

**Position: Favorable**

Submitted by: Denisse Guitarra, MD Conservation Advocate, Nature Forward



Connecting people and nature  
in the Capital Region

[natureforward.org](https://natureforward.org)

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Dear House Environment and Transportation & Appropriations Committees,

Nature Forward (formerly Audubon Naturalist Society) is the oldest independent environmental organization protecting nature in the DC metro region. Headquartered in Maryland, our mission is to inspire residents of the greater Washington, DC, region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and advocacy. We thank the House Environment and Transportation & Appropriations Committees for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB866 which we support favorably as amended by the Senate's Budget and Taxation Committee.

For many years, the Chesapeake Bay Trust has helped Nature Forward reach underserved and BIPOC communities; increase the impact of our native plants outreach, water quality awareness training, and stormwater management work; and transition to a new, more inclusive name. The Trust has supported multiple restoration projects at our headquarters at Woodend Nature Sanctuary that have had a direct, measurable impact on improving water quality in Rock Creek, the Potomac River, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. The Trust is a key sponsor of both our Taking Nature Black and Naturally Latinos conferences that spotlight the voices, viewpoints, and leadership of environmental professionals of color.

The breadth and impact of our mission work for people and nature in Maryland has been greatly enhanced because of grantmaking by The Chesapeake Bay Trust. The Trust's support has enabled Nature Forward to inspire thousands of people in Maryland to love and protect nature through the following programs:

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<sup>1</sup> SB866.Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation. Available at:

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0866?ys=2023RS>



- Water quality monitoring and learning centers at Prince George's and Montgomery County streams
- MWEEs (Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience, a required curricular element) with Pre-K children at Montgomery Housing Partnership
- Green Infrastructure Tours and the Guide to Best Practices at Woodend Nature Sanctuary
- Stormwater Management at Woodend Nature Sanctuary with companion video to provide Spanish Language Landscape Professional Training on Green Infrastructure
- Long Branch BIPOC Youth Campaign for Litter Reduction, ¡Si se puede!: Growing a Community of Empowered Environmental Leaders in Long Branch<sup>2</sup>
- Latinx community outreach and water quality monitoring in Prince George's County
- Nature Programs for Veterans
- Plant It Forward! Native Plant Outreach Training
- Latinx Landscapers Training at Woodend Nature Sanctuary
- Creek Critters community science water quality programming for Long Branch
- Permeable Walkway and Pavers at Woodend Nature Sanctuary to improve water quality in Rock Creek, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay
- Riparian Forest Buffer Restoration at Woodend Nature Sanctuary to improve water quality in Rock Creek, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay
- Stream Stabilization Design for Woodend Nature Sanctuary to improve water quality in Rock Creek, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay

If revenue managed by the Trust were to decline, our organization, along with many others in Maryland, would be directly and negatively impacted by a reduction in grant funds available to support our critical mission work for nature. On behalf of Nature Forward and our 28,000 members and supporters, we respectfully urge this committee for a favorable report SB866.

Sincerely,

Lisa Alexander  
Executive Director  
Nature Forward

Denisse Guitarra  
Maryland Conservation Advocate  
Nature Forward

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<sup>2</sup> Nature Forward's Long Branch Community outreach work from 2019-2023. Available at: <https://natureforward.org/program/long-branch-community-outreach/>

**SB0866\_DNR\_SUP\_E&T\_3-30-23.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Wilson

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 30, 2023

**BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 866 – Third Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Transportation – Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Appropriation**

**DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT**

#### **EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION**

The department supports SB 866. The Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) is a valuable partner in the state’s mission to restore and protect the natural resources and communities surrounding the Chesapeake Bay. The Trust provides a wide range of grants that seek to increase access to environmental education, provide much needed funding for demonstration-based restoration, and bolster community engagement. Similarly, the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) receives revenue through sales of the Ag Tag that go toward supporting promotion of the understanding and appreciation of the importance of agriculture in our daily lives. These grants often leverage more restrictive state and federal funds and expand upon projects allowing for more comprehensive restoration strategies and education initiatives.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Chesapeake Bay Trust is a private, non-profit grant making organization established by the General Assembly in 1985. Its purpose is to promote public awareness and participation in the restoration and protection of the water quality and aquatic and land resources of the Chesapeake Bay and the State. The Trust’s programs and activities are funded through a) sales of the *Treasure the Chesapeake* vehicle license plates b) donations from Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund income tax check-off program c) state and federal contracts and grants and; d) private donations. Under current statute, the Trust receives all revenues from the sales of the *Treasure the Chesapeake* vehicle plate, less administrative fees recouped by the state.

The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation is a private, non-profit established in 1989. MAEF is dedicated to increasing agricultural literacy and agricultural education, serving pre-kindergarten to post-secondary audiences. MAEF’s funding comes from sales of the Ag Tag license plates, plus other sources including grants, contributions, and sponsorships.

#### **BILL EXPLANATION**

This bill would guarantee that the Trust receives a direct budget appropriation from the State budget based on a formula that looks at the delta in revenue from *Treasure the Chesapeake* license plate sales between preceding fiscal years, provided that delta is positive. This bill sets up a similar appropriation and formula for the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation based on the sales of those specialized license plates.

**CBT.LTPOA.support-SB866.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jana Davis

Position: FAV

# London Towne Property Owners' Association, Inc.

Post Office Box 356  
Edgewater, Maryland 21037

DATE: March 2, 2023

To: Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee on Budget and Taxation

From: London Towne Property Owners Association, Inc. PO Box 356 Edgewater, MD 21037

RE: SB 866 Support with Amendment

The London Towne Property Owners Association (LTPOA) would like to express our support for the Chesapeake Bay Trust's (Trust) amendment to SB866 that ensures the revenues managed by the Trust remain stable at FY17-FY22 levels.

The Chesapeake Bay Trust has partnered with our organization to oversee living shoreline projects that have restored and protected nearly one mile of shoreline on the South River in Anne Arundel County. With the Trust's financial support, as well as their wealth of scientific and practical knowledge, LTPOA was recognized for a multi-year track record of supporting award winning projects to prevent shoreline erosion on Association property.

Over a ten-year period, the Trust awarded approximately \$400,000.00 of matching grant funds to LTPOA. With this financial support from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, the LTPOA was also given much needed assistance in our shoreline management strategy. The Trust provided technical expertise that focused on living shorelines and provided education on long-term ecological impacts in related areas such as buffer management, critical area care, and plant and animal habitat.

The Trust has helped give our community an incredible sense of pride and purpose to demonstrate good stewardship of our property by showing measurable positive improvements to the land and the environment. It is LTPOA's hope that the Chesapeake Bay Trust will continue to have a healthy state-supported annual budget so that other grantee organizations will receive financial and educational support in their endeavors to better Maryland's environment.

Sincerely,

  
Sarah Trees  
Executive Director, LTPOA

# **Ches Bay Trust Testimony - SB 866 - 3-30-23.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jana Davis

Position: FAV



## **Senate Bill 866**

### **Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation – Appropriation**

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**Date: March 30, 2023**

**Support as Amended**

Submitted to: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Submitted by: Jana Davis, Ph.D., President, Chesapeake Bay Trust

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#### **Summary**

Maryland has had only two commemorative vehicle license plates for 23 years: the “bay plate” and “ag tag.” Should additional commemorative plates be introduced, bay plate and ag tag revenues would likely decline (Figs 1-3 below). SB 866, as amended with the new formula, would keep the revenue managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) “whole” using general fund appropriations, benchmarked to current levels. The Trust does not keep the bay plate revenue: It distributes the funds to 350-400 grantees per year throughout Maryland (Youghiogheny, Chesapeake, and Coastal Bays watersheds). The amended bill would therefore predominantly help these hundreds of grantees.

#### **Background on the Chesapeake Bay Trust**

The Trust, a nonprofit grant-maker, was established by the General Assembly in 1985 to complement the work of larger state agencies by reaching community-based groups directly on the ground. The Trust’s method is to empower groups by providing them the ability to lead and own their own work to co-benefit their communities and natural resources, mainly through grants.

When the Trust was created, the General Assembly did not provide a general appropriation, but instead created two revenue streams: The Chesapeake Bay Commemorative License Plate program and the Chesapeake and Endangered Species Tax Check Off that raise private dollars. Bay plate revenue has remained stable since 2010, generating ~\$3.5 million per year. This stability is because the number of commemorative license plate options (two) has not changed for 23 years. Should more license plate designs become available, because there is a fixed number of vehicles, bay plate (and ag tag) revenue will likely drop, as has happened in other states (Figures 2, 3). Should revenues drop, Trust grant-making would also drop, and the Trust will be able to support fewer grantee organizations.

#### **The nature of license plate revenue**

Data from other states show that only about 8-10% of the population will spend an additional amount (~\$20) for a specialty license plate (Fig 1 below). Considering bay plates, ag tags, and the 900+ organizational tags (<https://mva.maryland.gov/Pages/licenseplates-Organizational.aspx>, mainly designed for awareness/pride rather than revenue), Maryland is at about the 10% saturation level now. Public opinion polling shows that about 70% of people buy the bay plate for aesthetic value. Currently the demographics of bay and ag tags owners are close to the demographics of Maryland by geography,

gender, and ethnicity/race. For example, 29-37% and 37-44% of people who have bay plates and ag tags, respectively, on their vehicles or on those of household members are of color.

Because there is a finite number of registered vehicles and 10% of the population already has a specialty license plate, the larger the number of license plate options, the less revenue each will generate (Figure 2 below). SB 866 would compensate for the drop in bay plate and ag tag revenue, as new plates become available to vehicle owners, with a general appropriation, with an amendment proposed that it be benchmarked to FY17-FY22 levels.

### **Chesapeake Bay Trust grant-making**

The Trust has made grants in every Maryland district, \$150 million through 12,000+ grants and projects since 1985, providing support for 100,000 K-12 students and adults annually to learn and accomplish measurable environmental improvement. The Trust makes 350-400 awards per year and has ~1,000 active awardees at any one time. (see <https://cbtrust.org/annual-report/>).

Demand far exceeds availability of even current level of funds by about 3:1.

Trust grantees are of two types: environmental organizations and non-environmental organizations that pursue green projects. Examples of the latter are schools, faith-based entities, homeowners' and civic associations, and nonprofits focusing on other causes (health, jobs, housing, etc.) who see an intersection between environment and their cause (e.g., Veterans Engagement program (<https://cbtrust.org/grants/veterans-engagement/>)). The Trust has long worked to bring new audiences to the table, as indicated by a 15+-year old Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative (<https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/>).



The Trust is known for its efficiency, putting on average 90 cents of every dollar into programs. Due to this uncommonly high efficiency, the Trust has been rated with the maximum four-star rating by the nation's leading charity evaluator, Charity Navigator, for more than two decades, putting it in the top 1% of non-profits in the nation.



### **Value of Bay Plate Revenue in Leveraging More Money for Maryland**

The Trust leverages the \$4 million in unrestricted bay plate and tax checkoff dollars into \$20 million+ annually by attracting other partners with resources. An example is the Trust's partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in which the Trust offers \$300,000, and the EPA matches it annually with ~\$1,000,000 for a Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns grant program. <https://cbtrust.org/grants/green-streets-green-jobs-green-towns/>; [\\$1M to help with 'vital' Chesapeake Bay improvement - WTOP News](#)



In addition, in 2021 and 2022, the General Assembly tapped the Trust to create and administer the Urban Trees Grant Program (2021) <https://cbtrust.org/grants/urban-trees/> and the Chesapeake Conservation Corps (2020) [www.cbtrust.org/corps](http://www.cbtrust.org/corps), which has been partly staffed and supported with unrestricted Bay Plate dollars. The bay plate and other unrestricted revenue also fund the Trust's K-12 environmental education, on-the-ground restoration, and community engagement grant programs.

Figure 1: Market saturation of background scene plates, with an example from Florida. (Florida posts their data in the clearest, most accessible format. Partial data are available from other states.)

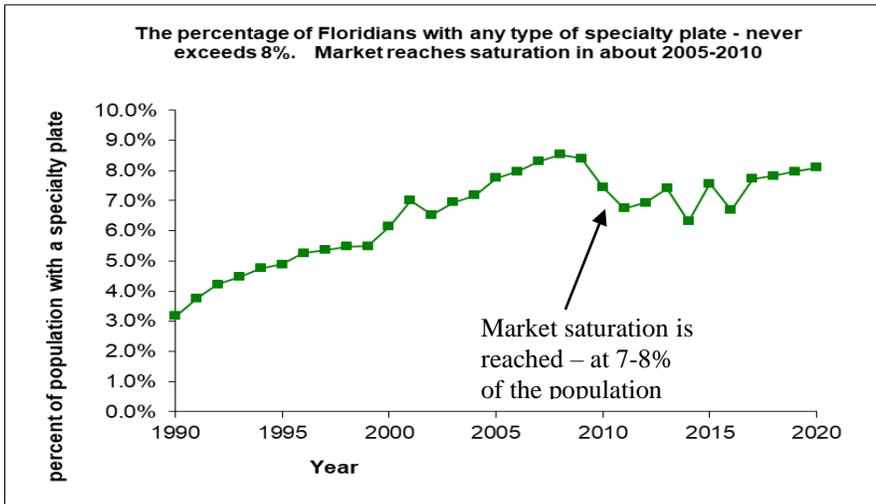


Figure 2: Examples of decreases in specialty license plate revenue with increasing #s of additional plates over time

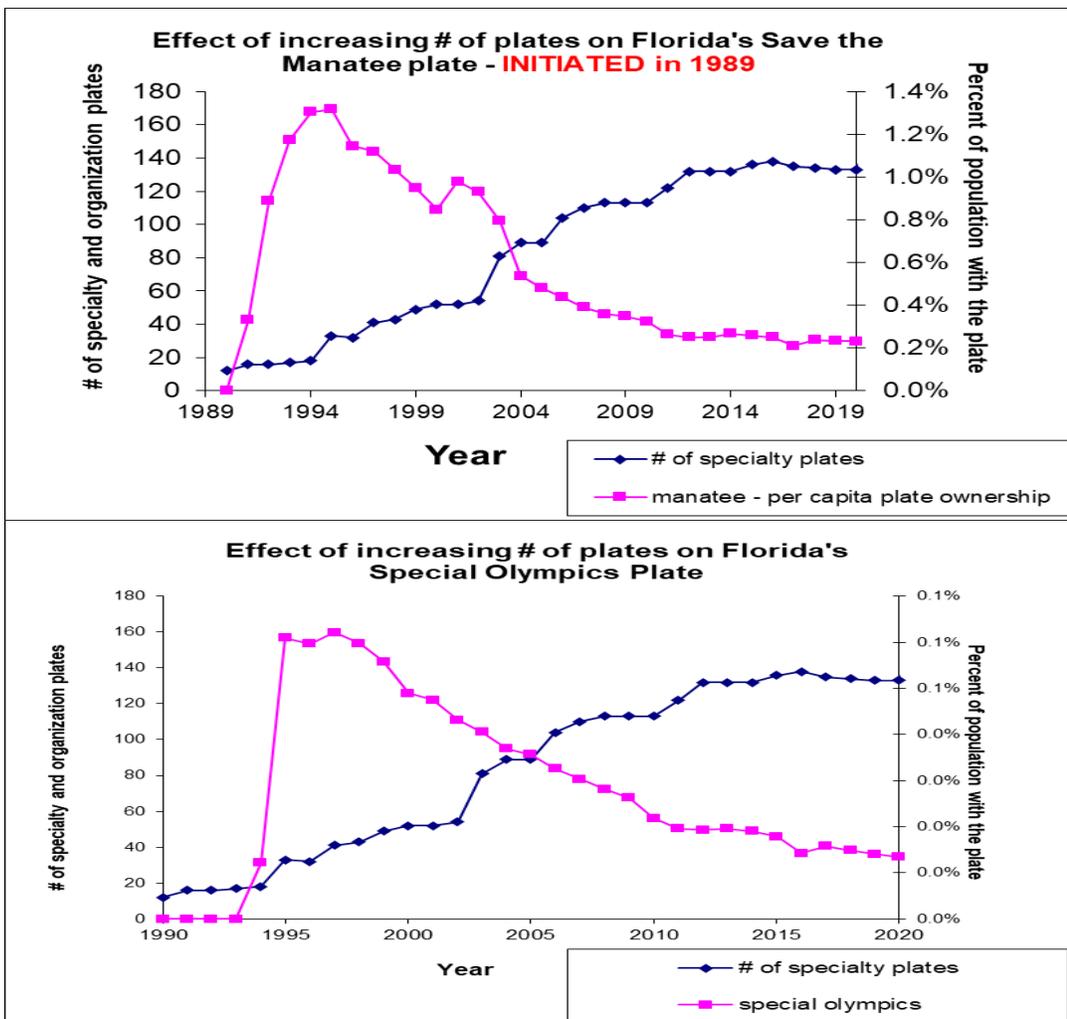
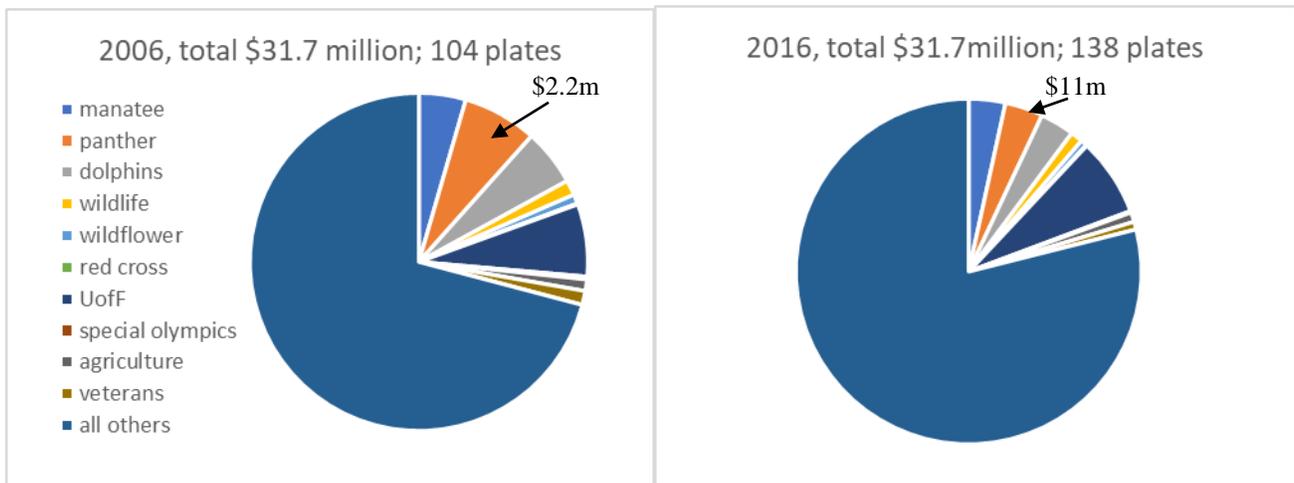


Figure 3: Florida license plate picture in 2005 (fewer plate options) vs. 2015 (more plate options): As there are more plate options, each individual one has a smaller piece of the revenue pie



**SB866-HB1257 Sign-on letter 3-30-23.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jana Davis

Position: FAV

March 30, 2023

**SB 866 - Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland  
Agricultural Education Foundation – Appropriation  
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT**

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Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

**The organizations listed below respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 866 with a revenue calculation amendment** to benchmark the annual revenue managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) to FY17-FY22 levels. In the unamended bill version, the revenues decline over time. SB866, with the amendment, ensures that the revenues managed by the Trust and MAEF remain stable as additional background scene/commemorative vehicle license plates become available to vehicle owners in Maryland in coming years.

Both the Trust and MAEF were established via government initiative, either statutorily by the General Assembly (the Trust, SB 583/ Chapter 789 of 1985) or as a result of a Governor's task force (MAEF). Neither were designed on a general fund appropriation model; rather, their important missions have been supported by private revenues generated by commemorative vehicle license plates now ubiquitous and a source of pride in Maryland (the "bay plate" and the "ag tag"). These two plates have been the only two commemorative plates in Maryland for 23 years, which has kept their revenues stable, unlike other states in which hundreds have developed over time (Florida, Virginia, Texas). As more background scene plates become available in any state, revenues generated by existing plates decline, because there is a finite number of vehicles. The same is expected to occur in Maryland.

If revenue managed by the Trust or MAEF were to decline, our organizations, along with many others in your districts, will be directly affected. Both the Trust and MAEF offer grant resources (and programming, for MAEF) to support groups like us.

The Trust distributes the bay plate revenue through 400 grants per year to engage Marylanders in the restoration of our natural resources (from mountains to Coastal Bays, in every legislative district). Over 100,000 students and adults every year have experiences that connect them to nature as a result of these grants (along with real, measurable environmental improvement). Some grantee organizations' project budgets are more than 50% derived from the Trust.

MAEF provides grants, scholarships, and/or science-based programming to approximately 50,000 elementary students per year; professional development for teachers; and important support for agricultural education at secondary and post-secondary levels. Agriculture is the state's largest commercial industry, and without the services provided by MAEF, we will not have the next generation of individuals to support the agricultural industry.

**For these reasons, we request a Favorable report on SB 866 as amended in the Senate.**

Sincerely,

Anacostia Watershed Society  
Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy  
Audubon Mid-Atlantic  
Baltimore County Farm Bureau  
Blue Water Baltimore  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Chesapeake Conservancy  
Chesapeake Legal Alliance  
ecoLatinos  
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy  
Friends of St Clements Bay  
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake  
London Towne Property Owners Association  
Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association  
Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education  
Maryland Coastal Bays Program  
Maryland Conservation Council  
Maryland Department of Agriculture  
Maryland Farm Bureau  
Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Association  
Montgomery County Farm Bureau  
Nature Forward  
NeighborSpace of Baltimore County  
Phillips Wharf Environmental Center  
Rock Creek Conservancy  
Rural Maryland Council  
Severn Riverkeeper  
ShoreRivers  
Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission  
Southern Maryland Audubon Society  
St. Mary's River Watershed Association  
Sugarloaf Citizens Association  
The 6<sup>th</sup> Branch

# House\_ENT\_SB866AudubonMidAtlantic\_SpecialVehicle\_R

Uploaded by: Jim Brown

Position: FAV



**Maryland Office**  
Patterson Park Audubon Ctr  
2901 E. Baltimore St  
Baltimore, MD 21214

March 30, 2023

**To:** Maryland House of Delegates - House Environment and Transportation Committee

**From:** Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

**Subject:** Favorable Testimony for **Maryland SB866 Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Appropriation**

Good afternoon. My name is Jim Brown. I am the policy director for Audubon Mid-Atlantic, here in Maryland. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic enthusiastically supports the SB866 as amended. Funding environmental education, habitat restoration, stormwater projects, tree plantings, and community greening is critical to protecting the ecosystems of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and to sustaining a movement of climate stewards in all of our diverse communities and landscapes here in Maryland and across the bay watershed. Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) fund invaluable projects and conduct meaningful engagement in every county and legislative jurisdiction in the state. These programs connect people to nature and plant the seeds for Maryland's future generations of conservationists and sustainability practitioners.

For more than a decade, the Trust has supported Patterson Park Audubon Center's community-centered conservation programs that seek to improve Baltimore City for migratory birds, the Bay, and our communities. Because of investment from the Trust, Audubon has fostered youth leadership on environmental issues, elevating their voices for healthier waterways, habitats, schoolyards, and neighborhoods. Additionally, Audubon and a dozen non-profit partners received multi-year capacity building funds to grow collaborative leadership in Baltimore City and County to achieve shared greening goals to restore ecosystems and waterways. Audubon has leveraged this investment to garner support from other sources, multiplying the impact, thanks to the seed planted by the Trust. The Trust is an essential partner in creating a healthier Chesapeake Bay watershed. SB866 will sustain this funding critical to having a healthy Bay and a resilient Maryland.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of this legislation.

Thank You,

Jim Brown

Policy Director  
Audubon Mid-Atlantic  
[Jim.brown@audubon.org](mailto:Jim.brown@audubon.org)

**SB 866 CBF FAV E&T APP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **Senate Bill 866**

Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation

Date: March 30, 2023	Position: <b>Favorable</b>
To: Environment & Transportation Committee Appropriations Committee	From: Matt Stegman, MD Staff Attorney

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 866 which would require the Governor to make an annual appropriation to the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) in the event revenue for these programs is reduced because of the introduction of additional commemorative vehicle license plates. Ensuring revenues for both organizations remain stable ensures they can continue their missions to engage Marylanders in the protection and enhancement of our environmental and agricultural resources.

Both the Trust and MAEF were established via government initiative. Neither were designed on a general fund appropriation model; rather, their important missions have been supported by private revenues generated by commemorative vehicle license plates (the “bay plate” and the “ag tag”). These two plates have been the only two commemorative plates in Maryland for 23 years, which has kept their revenues stable. Without legislative action, as more background scene plates become available, revenues generated by existing plates will decline imperiling the great work done by both organizations.

**CBF urges the Committee’s FAVORABLE report on SB 866.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

*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.*

# **MSP Itr to House Environment & Transportation Comm**

Uploaded by: Midgett Parker

Position: FAV

**Midgett S. Parker, Jr.**  
3229 Chrisland Drive  
Annapolis, Maryland 21403  
(443) 603-3091 // [mparker.mp11@gmail.com](mailto:mparker.mp11@gmail.com)

March 30, 2023

RE: SB 866 - Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation – Appropriation

Maryland General Assembly

Chairman Barve and the members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

As a former Trustee of the Chesapeake Bay Trust from 1999 to 2007 (8 years) and during that time served as the Chair in 2004, 2005, and 2006, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 866 as amended by the Senate with a revenue calculation amendment to benchmark the annual revenue managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the “CBT”) and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (“MAEF”) to FY17-FY22 levels. With the amended Bill, the revenues managed by CBT and MAEF remain stable as additional background scene/commemorative vehicle license plates become available to vehicle owners in Maryland.

As a historic reminder, both CBT and MAEF were established through government initiatives: (i) statutorily by the General Assembly (CBT through SB 583/ Chapter 789 of 1985); and (ii) as a result of a Governor’s task force (MAEF). Neither entities were designed on a general fund appropriation model; rather, their important missions have been supported through private revenues generated by the now ubiquitous commemorative vehicle license plates and a source of pride in Maryland (the “Bay Plate” and the “Ag Tag”). These two license plates have been the only two commemorative plates in Maryland for 23 years, which has helped to keep these entities’ revenues stable. In States in which multiple specialty license plates have developed (like Florida, Virginia, Texas) the revenue shared by such entities is unstable and declining.

As more background scene plates become available in any State, revenues generated by existing plates naturally decline, because there is a finite number of vehicles utilizing the license plates. The same is expected to occur in Maryland. If revenue managed by the Trust or MAEF were to decline, these non-profit entities, along with many others in your Districts, will be directly and negatively affected.

Both CBT and MAEF offer grant resources (and programming within MAEF) to support those on the front line in environmental stewardship and education efforts. CBT distributes the Bay Plate revenue through 400+ grants per year to engage Marylanders in the restoration of our State’s natural resources (from mountains to Coastal Bays, in every legislative District). Over 100,000 students and adults every year have experiences that connect them to nature as a result of these grants (along with real, measurable environmental improvement). Some grantee organizations’ project budgets are more than 50% derived from the distribution of CBT grant funding. MAEF provides grants, scholarships, and science-based programming to approximately 50,000 elementary students per year; professional development for teachers; and important support for agricultural education at secondary and post-secondary levels. Agriculture is the state’s largest commercial industry, and without the services provided by MAEF, our State will not have the next generation of individuals and leaders to support the agricultural industry.

For these reasons and more, I request a Favorable Report on SB-866 as amended by the Senate.

Sincerely,



Midgett S. Parker, Jr., Esq.

**SB 866 Letter of Support .docx (2).pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel Jones

Position: FAV



# Maryland Department of Agriculture

*Office of the Secretary*

**Wes Moore**, Governor

**Aruna Miller**, Lt. Governor

**Kevin M. Atticks**, Secretary

**Steven A. Connelly**, Deputy Secretary

Agriculture | *Maryland's Leading  
Industry*

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building  
50 Harry S Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
mda.maryland.gov

**410.841.5885** Baltimore/Washington  
**410.841.5846** Fax

## Maryland Department of Agriculture

### Legislative Comment

**Date: March 30, 2023**

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 866

**SHORT TITLE:** Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation

**MDA POSITION:** SUPPORT

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The Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) were established via government initiative without a designated general funding appropriation in the State Budget. SB 866, if passed with amendments, ensures that the revenues managed by the Trust and MAEF remain stable as additional commemorative vehicle license plates become available to vehicle owners in Maryland in coming years.

The important missions of these organizations have been supported by private revenues generated by commemorative vehicle license plates, referred to as the “Bay Plate” and “Ag Tag”. These two plates have been the only commemorative license plates in Maryland for 23 years, keeping each program’s revenues stable. The Chesapeake Bay Trust utilizes their funding to improve Chesapeake Bay watersheds and the Maryland Agricultural Education Fund utilizes the revenue to increase agricultural literacy and education. Two necessary causes for the sustainment and preservation of our environment and a thriving agricultural industry.

The addition of any commemorative tag may cause revenues of existing plates to drop. SB 866 with an amendment to establish a revenue calculation to benchmark the annual revenue managed by the Trust and (MAEF) to FY17-FY22 levels would keep these revenues stable for years to come.

MDA supports SB 866 and thanks you for your consideration of a favorable report.

**If you have additional questions, please contact Rachel Jones, Director of Government Relations, at [Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov](mailto:Rachel.Jones2@maryland.gov) or (667) 408-0134.**

**SB866\_Zucker\_FWA\_E&T.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Craig Zucker

Position: FAV

**CRAIG J. ZUCKER**  
*Legislative District 14*  
Montgomery County



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 122  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3625 · 301-858-3625  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3625  
Fax 410-841-3618 · 301-858-3618  
Craig.Zucker@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee  
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker**  
**Senate Bill 866/House Bill 1257 - Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation**  
**House Environment & Transportation | Appropriations**  
**March 30, 2023**  
**1:00 PM**  
**Position: Favorable**

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill 866 - Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation**, which passed the Senate with unanimous approval.

Senate Bill 866 is a companion bill to Senate Bill 867 - The Maryland Heroes Plate legislation - that will soon be heard in this committee. Senate Bill 866 would ensure that the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) would be funded in perpetuity should plate sales decline.

The Chesapeake Bay Trust and MAEF's operations are almost entirely dependent on the revenue generated from the sale and renewal of their current special license plates. This bill is intended to create a sustainable funding source for these two entities in case of declining sales, providing longevity for their existence and grant programs.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 866. Thank you for your kind consideration.

**MAEF ENT SB866 FWA March 2023.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susanne Richards

Position: FAV



**Senate Bill 866**  
**Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland**  
**Agricultural Education Foundation – Appropriation**

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**Date: March 7, 2023**

**Support As Amended**

Submitted to: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Submitted by: Susanne Richards, Executive Director, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc.

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**Summary**

Maryland’s two colorful commemorative license plates, the “Ag Tag” and the “Bay Plate,” have benefitted Maryland for more than two decades by providing revenue to support the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) and the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT). Revenues have remained stable for these organizations and their important work because *only two commemorative plates* have been available. In other states, when additional plates have been added, revenues for each plate have declined. SB866, with the amendment, would benchmark a minimum revenue level using general fund appropriations. *If there is no loss in revenue, no appropriations would be required.*

**Background**

The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation was formed in 1989 at the recommendation of a Governor’s Task Force to support agricultural education and promote agricultural literacy. At the time, budget cuts had required elimination of positions and services in support of Agriculture Education at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). A group of private citizens and the agricultural industry fostered the foundation through its early years.

Maryland’s “Ag Tag” debuted in 2001, and the revenues from the tag greatly increased MAEF’s ability to grow its services to Maryland education. In addition to the “Ag Tag” license plate revenues, MAEF is supported by private gifts, grants and program fees.

Over the ensuing decades, MAEF has picked up roles and responsibilities which had traditionally been part of MSDE’s Office of Agriculture Education, including professional development training for Agriculture Teachers, management of the Career Student Technical Organization, Maryland FFA, and day-to-day duties within the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources cluster.

In addition, MAEF operates a statewide Agricultural Literacy program, providing Mobile Science Lab programs to 50,000 elementary students annually and Mobile Agriculture Showcase exhibits to public events; offers professional development opportunities for all teachers to master using agriculture as a relevant context for teaching core subjects at any level; provides important connections, support and direction for Agriculture Education and Literacy programs statewide; offers two scholarship programs annually and provides grants for school and community gardens.

Upcoming changes to Maryland's educational system as a result of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future will greatly impact Agriculture Education. This pathway provides an important pipeline for individuals to prepare for careers in Maryland's largest commercial industry, which is responsible for 350,000 jobs and more than \$8.25 billion to Maryland's economy annually, generating more than \$755.2 million in state and local taxes. Please support SB866 as amended.

**SB866-HB1257 Sign-on letter 3-30-23.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susanne Richards

Position: FAV

March 30, 2023

**SB 866 - Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland  
Agricultural Education Foundation – Appropriation  
POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT**

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Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

**The organizations listed below respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 866 with a revenue calculation amendment** to benchmark the annual revenue managed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) to FY17-FY22 levels. In the unamended bill version, the revenues decline over time. SB866, with the amendment, ensures that the revenues managed by the Trust and MAEF remain stable as additional background scene/commemorative vehicle license plates become available to vehicle owners in Maryland in coming years.

Both the Trust and MAEF were established via government initiative, either statutorily by the General Assembly (the Trust, SB 583/ Chapter 789 of 1985) or as a result of a Governor's task force (MAEF). Neither were designed on a general fund appropriation model; rather, their important missions have been supported by private revenues generated by commemorative vehicle license plates now ubiquitous and a source of pride in Maryland (the "bay plate" and the "ag tag"). These two plates have been the only two commemorative plates in Maryland for 23 years, which has kept their revenues stable, unlike other states in which hundreds have developed over time (Florida, Virginia, Texas). As more background scene plates become available in any state, revenues generated by existing plates decline, because there is a finite number of vehicles. The same is expected to occur in Maryland.

If revenue managed by the Trust or MAEF were to decline, our organizations, along with many others in your districts, will be directly affected. Both the Trust and MAEF offer grant resources (and programming, for MAEF) to support groups like us.

The Trust distributes the bay plate revenue through 400 grants per year to engage Marylanders in the restoration of our natural resources (from mountains to Coastal Bays, in every legislative district). Over 100,000 students and adults every year have experiences that connect them to nature as a result of these grants (along with real, measurable environmental improvement). Some grantee organizations' project budgets are more than 50% derived from the Trust.

MAEF provides grants, scholarships, and/or science-based programming to approximately 50,000 elementary students per year; professional development for teachers; and important support for agricultural education at secondary and post-secondary levels. Agriculture is the state's largest commercial industry, and without the services provided by MAEF, we will not have the next generation of individuals to support the agricultural industry.

**For these reasons, we request a Favorable report on SB 866 as amended in the Senate.**

Sincerely,

Anacostia Watershed Society  
Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy  
Audubon Mid-Atlantic  
Baltimore County Farm Bureau  
Blue Water Baltimore  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Chesapeake Conservancy  
Chesapeake Legal Alliance  
ecoLatinos  
Gunpowder Valley Conservancy  
Friends of St Clements Bay  
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake  
London Towne Property Owners Association  
Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association  
Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education  
Maryland Coastal Bays Program  
Maryland Conservation Council  
Maryland Department of Agriculture  
Maryland Farm Bureau  
Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Association  
Montgomery County Farm Bureau  
Nature Forward  
NeighborSpace of Baltimore County  
Phillips Wharf Environmental Center  
Rock Creek Conservancy  
Rural Maryland Council  
Severn Riverkeeper  
ShoreRivers  
Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission  
Southern Maryland Audubon Society  
St. Mary's River Watershed Association  
Sugarloaf Citizens Association  
The 6<sup>th</sup> Branch

# **MD SB 866 Special Vehicle Registration Plates\_NWF**

Uploaded by: Holly Gallagher

Position: FWA



## National Wildlife Federation

Mid-Atlantic Regional Center  
151 West Street, Suite 101 • Annapolis, MD 21401 • 443-759-3400

**Date:** March 3, 2023

**Bill:** SB 866, Special Vehicle Registration Plates – Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation

**Position:** Support with Amendment

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Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

The National Wildlife Federation respectfully requests a favorable report for **SB 866 – Special Vehicle Registration Plates – Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation – Appropriation**, with a revenue calculation amendment, which will ensure that state funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) remains stable as additional background scene/commemorative vehicle license plates become available to vehicle owners in Maryland in coming years.

Founded in 1936, National Wildlife Federation (NWF) is one of the country's oldest and largest conservation organizations. NWF's Mid-Atlantic Regional Center, based in Annapolis, Maryland, works closely with state and local partners to protect and restore wildlife habitat and to support resilient, healthy communities across the state, and throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Over the years, funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust has allowed NWF to work directly with communities in Baltimore City, Prince George's County, Howard County and others to install green stormwater infrastructure and coastal resilience projects, plant native pollinator habitat, increase equitable access to nearby nature, and educate and engage K-12 students, teachers, and the broader community.

The grant programs administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust help to support the critical work of nearly 350 community-based groups to reduce pollution and clean up our rivers and streams, restore thriving natural habitats, improve access to local green spaces, and foster the next generation of conservation leaders. In the past year alone, the Trust's grantmaking resulted in the installation of almost 300,000 native trees, pollinator plants, marsh grasses, and other native plants; the release of over 4 million oysters; the creation of almost 48,000 square feet of rain gardens; and the engagement of close to 27,000 students and 1,800 teachers.

Providing stable funding for the Trust, augmenting any "Bay Plate" revenue declines as new license plates become available in the future, will help ensure the ongoing success of these grant programs and the direct benefits they provide to communities throughout the state. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony and respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 866.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Mihills  
Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Regional Center  
443-759-3403 | [mihillsj@nwf.org](mailto:mihillsj@nwf.org)

# **SB866 - RMC Support as Amended Testimony - Special**

Uploaded by: Megan D'Arcy

Position: FWA

*Susan O'Neill, Chair*

*Charlotte Davis, Executive Director*

Testimony in Support as Amended of  
Senate Bill 866 – Special Vehicle Registration Plates – Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland  
Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Appropriations Committee  
March 30, 2023

**The Rural Maryland Council supports Senate Bill 866 – Special Vehicle Registration Plates – Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation – Appropriation as amended.** This bill requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill for certain fiscal years an appropriation for the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc. that is calculated based on the amount of revenue collected from certain special vehicle registration plates in certain fiscal years; and, generally relating to the funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the “Trust”) and the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF).

The Trust’s mission is to engage and empower diverse groups to take actions that enrich natural resources and local communities of the Chesapeake Bay region. This is accomplished by annually awarding more than \$10 million in grant funding each year to hundreds of nonprofits and community organizations throughout the region for hands-on projects that are ensuring a cleaner, greener, healthier Chesapeake, Coastal Bays and Youghiogheny watershed for years to come. MAEF’s mission is to promote the importance of agriculture in everyone’s daily lives by increasing agricultural literacy and agricultural education. MAEF provides grants, scholarships, and/or science-based programming to approximately 50,000 elementary students per year; professional development for teachers; and important support for agricultural education at secondary and post-secondary levels.

For the past 23 years, both the Trust and MAEF have been supported by private revenues generated by commemorative vehicle license plates now ubiquitous and a source of pride in Maryland (the “bay plate” and the “ag tag”). With an increase in interest in additional plates being offered by other organizations, the revenue generated by the Trust and MAEF plates will decline. If revenue managed by the Trust or MAEF were to decline, grant funded projects related to their work will be directly affected. Senate Bill 866 will provide an annual appropriation for the Trust and MAEF to make these two organizations whole.

The Rural Maryland Council respectfully requests your favorable support of Senate Bill 866 as amended to ensure the revenues managed by MAEF and the Trust remain stable.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.