



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.