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House Bill 842 – Right to Repair – Agricultural Equipment

Committee: Economic Matters

MGPA Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA) serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. MGPA supports House Bill 842 which would require an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to make available, on fair and reasonable terms, certain documentation, parts, and tools (inclusive of any updates) to an independent repair provider (or owner) of farm equipment to allow for the diagnosis, maintenance, or repair of the farm equipment.

Agricultural equipment is absolutely essential to farm operations, maintenance and food production. As with most vehicles and equipment, breakdowns happen. Farming doesn't wait and when it is time to plant or harvest, access to repair services in a timely manner is absolutely essential. The availability of equipment manufacturers repair services is not always readily available in Maryland. For some of the manufacturers, the closest service person is several states away. We have had situations where our members have had to wait 3-4 weeks in the middle of harvest for their combines to be repaired which is devastating when crops are ready to come off the fields. Additionally, farmers are beholden to the monopoly of the equipment manufacturers on pricing often paying a flat \$500 per service call fee plus \$100+ per hour from the time their truck leaves the shop until they return.

House Bill 842 seeks to bring farmers some relief to these issues and introduce competition in to the marketplace for equipment repair.

***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

We urge your favorable report on House Bill 842.