



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

February 26, 2025

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Opposition of HB1175 - Nutrient Management – Tidal Buffer – Vegetative Buffers and Restriction on Fertilizer Application

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony expressing concerns regarding HB1175 Nutrient Management – Tidal Buffer – Vegetative Buffers and Restriction on Fertilizer Application. This bill includes provisions that would prohibit nutrient application within the 100-foot tidal buffer.

While the bill does not explicitly ban farming within the buffer zone, restricting fertilizer application would significantly impact the ability to farm in that area. Without necessary nutrients, the land's productivity would decline, making continued agricultural use challenging. This approach places limitations on farming under the guise of an incentive program, leaving landowners with few practical alternatives.

If the goal is to encourage buffer establishment, voluntary participation should be the foundation of the approach rather than strict regulatory measures. Providing increased incentives—such as enhanced Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) payments and cost-share opportunities—would make buffer adoption more feasible for farmers. Offering competitive annual per-acre rental payments that align with potential crop production revenue would further support voluntary participation while maintaining agricultural viability.

As currently written, HB1175 imposes restrictions that may be difficult for farmers to navigate while presenting them as voluntary measures. A more balanced approach would remove the prohibition on nutrient application and instead prioritize stronger financial support for buffer implementation. This way, the bill could meet environmental objectives without placing undue hardship on Maryland's agricultural community. The Maryland Farm Bureau respectfully urges an unfavorable report on HB1175.

Sincerely,

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

Please reach out to Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions