

February 25, 2025

To: House HGO Committee Considering HB386 PFAS Ban Bill

From: Mason Farms Produce and Cottingham Farm regarding HB386 Testimony

We are providing a supplemental response to inquiries made during the hearing regarding whether there are alternatives to PFAS that can be used in Maryland farming.

Between the undersigned **170 farmers in our original testimony and all of Maryland's certified organic growers**, listed in the *USDA Organic Integrity Database*, we demonstrate that Maryland farmers can and do grow all of the crops grown in the State of Maryland, and we can do this without PFAS pesticides.

Specifically, **these farmers grow the crops listed below, raise the animals listed below, and manage insects, pests, diseases, and weeds on our farms by** (1) using synthetic inputs other than PFAS, and/or (2) using biological and other organic inputs, and/or (3) using cultural practices on our farms including crop rotation, physical barriers, mulching, variety selection, planting timing, companion crops, trap crops, trapping and luring, true integrated pest management and other methods, and (4) focusing on soil health and biodiversity. All of these demonstrate there is no need to use PFAS pesticides, which would poison our land, food, customers, and surrounding waterways.

Many opponents of this bill (including Maryland Grain Producers Association, Maryland Farm Bureau, Delmarva Chicken Association, Crop Life America and others) **make much of the need to manage pests and control pesticide resistance with rotation of inputs. That much is true.** We farmers in support of SB345/HB386, however, **don't use PFAS in that line-up for two very good reasons:** they inflict damage (to us, our families, as well as others) and they are not necessary. (If they were, there would be no organic farmers in the world, as these are prohibited in the organic regime.)

Pesticide resistance results from over-reliance on pesticides, leading to ever-increasing amounts of pesticides applied—of even greater concern when pertaining to the long-term persistence of PFAS pesticides and an increasing list of crops where PFAS uptake is too high .

Organic, transitional, and a growing number of conventional farmers have taken positive steps toward solving pest pressures in their crops. On-farm research, trials, workgroups, planning teams, and research grants are all actively working on better and better solutions to agronomic challenges - pests not the least among them.

All of these practices work with the soil environment, not against it.

And on our two farms, we successfully employ all manner of additional conservation practices including buffer strips, filter strips, tree and shrub riparian buffers, wetlands, woodlands, and winter and in-season cover crops. And we can do this while we do **no-till production of grain on a large scale.**

Still, opponents to this bill claim that producers will inevitably suffer hardships because of difficulties implementing soil conservation, like no-till practices, without PFAS in their toolkit.

This notion of land stewards being rendered incapable of continuing soil BMPs (Best Management Practices) is erroneous and ignores the multitude of local stakeholders and robust partnerships funding conservation and providing outreach to the agricultural community, including MDA, University of MD Extension, and NRCS.

We have included the **following list of crops** that our 170 testimony signed-on farmers grow, in addition to crops grown by the organic community of Maryland:

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|--------------|--------------|----------|----------------|
| Feed Corn | Apples | Eggplant | Potatoes |
| Feed Soy | Arugula | Fennel | Radicchio |
| Winter Wheat | Asian Greens | Figs | Radish |
| Winter Rye | Asparagus | Flowers | Spinach |
| Alfalfa | Beans | Garlic | Summer Squash |
| Sorghum- | Beets | Ginger | Strawberries |
| Sudan grass | Bok Choy | Herbs | Sunchokes |
| Barley | Broccoli | Honey | Sweet Potatoes |
| Oats | Cabbage | Lettuce | Tomatoes |
| Clover | Carrot | Mustard | Turmeric |
| Hairy Vetch | Cauliflower | Okra | Turnips |
| Winter pea | Celery | Peppers | Watermelon |
| Cover Crop | Chard | | Winter Squash |
| Mixes | Cucumber | | |

Animals include Pigs, Meat Birds, Egg Laying Chickens, Beef and Dairy Cattle.

Cleo Braver, Cottingham Farm, cleo@cottinghamfarm.com

Steve Kraszewski, Mason Farms Produce, swkraz@gmail.com