



February 27, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair  
House Environment & Transportation Committee

**Re: House Bill 949 – Agriculture – Noxious Weeds – Palmer Amaranth**

Position: **Information**

Chair Korman & Committee Members:

The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) appreciates the opportunity to provide information on **House Bill 949 – Agriculture – Noxious Weeds – Palmer Amaranth**. MASCD, incorporated in 1956, promotes practical and effective soil, water, and natural resource related programs to all Marylanders. Through individual conservation districts MASCD provides leadership, education, cooperation, and local direction, on a voluntary basis.

House Bill 949 requires the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), upon finding Palmer Amaranth on land, to issue an order to the landowner to eradicate the weed within two weeks and to reinspect every two weeks until MDA determines that Palmer Amaranth has been eradicated. Palmer Amaranth produces extremely large quantities of seeds and persists for multiple seasons in the soil seed bank, the two-week deadline is not achievable in many situations. As written, the statute risks placing landowners in technical violation as soon as an order is issued, even when they are acting in good faith. A large majority of Maryland's cropland is operated under leases, often with absentee landowners. As drafted, House Bill 949 directs orders to "the owner of the land," even though the tenant usually makes day-to-day weed-control decisions. The bill does not specify notice to the operator or address how responsibility for compliance and penalties should be allocated when owner and tenant roles differ.

MASCD supports action against Palmer Amaranth and recognizes the sponsors' commitment to protecting Maryland agriculture and natural resources. Our concern is not with the goal of controlling this noxious weed, but with ensuring that House Bill 949's timelines, inspection requirements, and enforcement tools are realistic, adequately resourced, and aligned with existing conservation and soil health programs.

Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Nelson, Executive Director  
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts