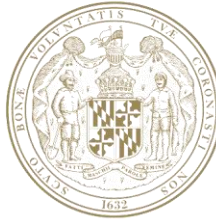


JEFFERSON L. GHRIST
Co-CHAIR

NATALIE ZIEGLER
Co-CHAIR



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES HOUSE RURAL CAUCUS

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment & Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Korman and Honorable Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the Rural Caucus, we are writing to request alterations to **HB 1268 – The CHERISH Our Communities Act**.

As you know, rural communities rely heavily on a healthy environment to support our livelihoods, natural resources, and quality of life. As such, we appreciate this legislation's intent to regulate and reduce pollution. However, including Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) is duplicative, unnecessary, and may bring unintended consequences to our rural areas.

CAFOs are non-discharge facilities which are already subjected to a rigorous public permitting process that is accompanied by aggressive oversight and strict zoning regulations. Subjecting CAFOs to additional permitting is duplicative and adds an additional layer of regulatory obstacles to an already overburdened industry. Furthermore, a large portion of the Eastern Shore would fall under the "At-Risk Census Tract" due to proximity to existing CAFOs, which could potentially hinder economic development by slowing or blocking other large projects under consideration in these rural communities.

To address these concerns, the Rural Caucus has included a proposed amendment from Co-Chair Ghrist that would strike CAFOs from the "Covered General Permit" requirements of the legislation.

With these aforementioned changes, the Rural Caucus supports HB 1286 and requests a favorable report with the attached amendment.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jefferson L. Ghrist".

Delegate Jefferson L. Ghrist
Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Natalie Ziegler".

Delegate Natalie Ziegler
Co-Chair



HB1268/533924/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

26 FEB 26
15:44:17

BY: Delegate Ghrist

(To be offered in the Environment and Transportation Committee)

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 1268

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 3, strike line 16 in its entirety; and in lines 17 and 18, strike “**2.**” and “**3.**”, respectively, and substitute “**1.**” and “**2.**”, respectively.

On page 4, strike line 2 in its entirety; and in lines 3, 4, and 5, strike “**3.**”, “**4.**”, and “**5.**”, respectively, and substitute “**2.**”, “**3.**”, and “**4.**”, respectively.