

Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture

2018 Annual Report to Governor Larry Hogan and the Maryland General Assembly

The Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture was established on June 29, 2006 to "promote the economic profitability of agriculture in the State by ensuring that all appropriate State agencies work in a cooperative, coordinated manner with local government and industry groups in planning, implementing, overseeing and evaluating intergovernmental initiatives related to agricultural affairs of the State."

Primary Responsibilities:

- A. Promote a clear and consistent "business-friendly" climate for agriculture in the State by serving as a liaison between the Governor and local governments and industry organizations;
- B. Develop an annual, coordinated intergovernmental plan for services and functions dealing with the agricultural affairs of the State;
- C. Develop procedures for identifying and assessing agricultural developments with a potential for impact on the State and on local governments;
- D. Develop and implement a consistent, systematic method for the coordination of the State's agricultural economic development activities;
- E. Develop and implement specific and measurable actions to improve the economic and regulatory climate for agriculture in the State;
- F. Make recommendations for programs and policies, if appropriate, in order to ensure that the needs and goals of the State's agricultural strategy are met and accomplished; AND
- G. Undertake the establishment of an "agricultural affairs information center" that serves as the first point of contact regarding agricultural issues impacting farmers in the State.

The commission met once during the 2018 calendar year on Feb. 14, 2018. The following presenters touched on a wide-range of areas that are important to the agriculture community.

- George Mayo, Executive Director, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Presentation on "Promoting the Understanding and Appreciation of the Importance of Agriculture in Our Daily Lives"
- Laurie Adelhardt, Co-Founder, My Maryland Farmers - Presentation on "Singing Outside the Choir"

On May 15, 2018, the commission was invited to attend the signing ceremony for a bill that establishes a model definition for agritourism in the Land Use article for county governments to adopt through their legislative process as a local ordinance, resolution, law, or rule. The bill was

submitted by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and is based on language developed by the commission during fiscal year 2017.

Four years ago, the commission established an agritourism working group to develop a list of major issues and make recommendations to the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture on the State's business environment for agritourism operations. Comprised of representatives from the agriculture community, county planning offices, and government agencies, the workgroup drafted a model definition that counties may adopt.

The work conducted by the commission has already been beneficial and influential; just this past year Anne Arundel County used the commission's definition to develop a county-based agritourism committee to develop legislation to establish an agritourism definition. This was also a way for the county to address agritourism activities as an allowable use in certain zoning districts and define building code requirements for existing farm buildings used in agritourism activities.