



January 2018

Support Budget Amendments for Agriculture Cost-Share Program

Both the Senate and House support funding for the Commonwealth’s agricultural cost-share program, with several members introducing legislation to increase and provide stability to the state’s agriculture cost-share program:

Item	Patron	Amount	Description
362 #1s and 362 #2s; 3-6.01 #1s	Hanger	\$10 million in additional funding per year	Provides additional funding and a stable revenue source for the agriculture cost-share program by directing all revenues from the recordation tax to the Natural Resources Commitment Fund
362 #6s	Lewis	\$57.5 million in additional funding each year	Provides additional funding to support the agriculture best management cost-share program to the level achieved in 2016
3-1.01 #2s	Hanger	Language	Provides additional funds for the agriculture cost-share program by transferring un-refunded marine fuel sales revenues
362 #4h and 362 #8h; 3-6.01 #1h	Landes	\$10 million in additional funding per year	Provides additional funding and a stable revenue source for the agriculture cost-share program by directing all revenues from the recordation tax to the Natural Resources Commitment Fund
362 #2h	Webert	\$57.5 million in additional funding each year	Provides additional funding to support the agriculture best management cost-share program to the level achieved in 2016
3-1.01 #4h	Landes	Language	Provides additional funds for the agriculture cost-share program by transferring un-refunded marine fuel sales revenues

CBF is thankful the above patrons for submitting budget amendments to help fund Virginia’s agricultural cost-share program. The program helps farmers put in place practices like fencing cattle out of streams, planting streamside trees and grasses, implementing nutrient management plans, and others. These practices are the most cost-effective steps Virginia can take to restore the Bay and local streams under the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint.



Photos of a farm before (left) and after (right) stream fencing and buffer installation.

Both chambers also have amendments to create more stability for the cost-share program by directing all revenues from the recordation tax to the Natural Resources Commitment Fund. Currently, half of the recordation tax goes to the Fund. Additional funding and stability for the cost-share program can come from introduced amendments that transfer un-refunded marine fuel sales revenues to the cost-share program. Both initiatives, which seek to provide stable and consistent funding for the cost-share program, are recommendations from a stakeholder group that met in 2017.

In addition to leading to cleaner water, investments in these practices create jobs and help local economies. A network of small businesses benefit when a farmer installs one of these projects—from contractors to lumber yards to tree nurseries. Nutrient management plans allow farmers to maximize yield so they save on fertilizer costs while maintaining production. Studies have shown that implementing farm conservation practices at levels necessary to restore the Chesapeake Bay would create nearly 12,000 jobs and that every \$1.00 invested in Bay restoration will generate \$4.00.

The General Assembly has previously made significant commitments to farmers and to those who depend on and enjoy local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. There is still a need and a desire to install more practices, improving our local waterways and supporting our farm economies. **As our legislators make final budget decisions, we urge them to continue strong support for the agricultural cost-share program. In addition, to ensure a consistent and reliable level of funding for farmers and clean water, we urge legislators to support the proposals to direct all revenues from the recordation tax as well as un-refunded marine fuel sales revenues to the cost-share program.**



I could not have done it without technical assistance and funding from these programs. Sure, the programs fund this to improve the river, but it helps my farm and the economy as well.

Jimmy Callison, cattle farmer who used state cost-share funds to install stream fencing and a buffer on his farm in Summerdean, Virginia.

For more information or questions, contact Peggy Sanner, Virginia Assistant Director and Senior Attorney, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, at 804/780-1392 or psanner@cbf.org.



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

Founded in 1967, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) conservation organization dedicated to saving a national treasure—the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers and streams. Its motto, Save the Bay, defines the organization's mission and commitment. With headquarters in Annapolis, MD, offices in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia, and 17 field centers, CBF works throughout the Chesapeake Bay's 64,000-square-mile watershed to build an informed citizenry, advocate pollution-reduction strategy, and enforce the law. CBF is supported by more than 200,000 active members and has a staff of 170 full-time employees. Approximately 80 percent of CBF's \$23.6 million annual budget is privately raised.

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