

Nearshore Farm and Finance Act (SB898 / HB1175)

(Nutrient Management – Tidal Buffer – Vegetative
Buffers and Restriction on Fertilizer Application)

FACT SHEET

Bill Sponsor: Senator Sara Love (District 16), Delegate Dana Stein (District 11B)

BACKGROUND

Protecting the Chesapeake Bay requires smart solutions that support both our environment and our farming communities. The Nearshore Farm Finance Act achieves a balanced approach to both goals by establishing waterfront farm buffers while providing financial compensation to both landowners and tenant farmers. The bill increases the setback for nutrient application within this sensitive area of land. At the same time, it provides generous incentives for farmers to install long-term, targeted conservation practices.

- Current setbacks from tidal waters are insufficient to protect the Bay from agricultural runoff
- Conservation practices installed in nearshore areas are six times as effective as those installed further upland

WHAT THE ACT WILL DO

- It prevents excess pollution from agricultural fertilizer applications that would otherwise be permitted within 100 feet of Maryland tidal water.
- It further accelerates nutrient removal with the opportunity for farmers to voluntarily enroll in installing high-performing, permanent buffers in these most-effective, nearshore target areas.
- Creates the first incentive program to provide value to tenant farmers who work with the State on targeted conservation practices and fertilizer application setbacks.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR MARYLAND

Maryland's agricultural sector has not fully achieved nutrient and sediment reduction goals to protect the bay. This bill targets the most efficient areas to install conservation practices and provides an incentive package to ensure farmer participation.