



RMC
Rural Maryland Council

**2021 Virtual Rural Maryland Day
February 11th, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm**



Welcome to Virtual Rural Maryland Day! We are very happy you can join us safely for this special time to connect with legislators one-on-one. We promise it will be a great day for you and appreciate your patience as we navigate this virtual day together.

Participant Meeting Packet Contents

- I. Agenda**
 - a. Rural Maryland Day (RMD)**
 - b. 12:00 to 12:30pm RMD Component**
 - c. Rural Caucus**
- II. Best Practices & Helpful Directives**
- III. Teams**
- IV. Legislative Appointment Scheduler By Team**
- V. Legislative Priorities**
- VI. Talking Points**

RMC staff are available to help! You can identify staff as they will have RMC written before their name. You can contact them by sending messages via the chat in the Zoom main session area or reach out to them by phone to call or text using the numbers highlighted in the box.

Charlotte Davis: 301-371-8183

Megan D’Arcy: 667-458-9101

Dakota Matthews: 240-920-2553

Amanda Clevenger: 667-204-0897



Virtual Rural Maryland Day

Thursday, February 11, 2021

8:30am – 12:30pm



Agenda

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

RMC Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82071621138>

Meeting ID: 820-7162-1138

Toll Free Number: 1-877-853-5257

Time	Location	Description
3:30pm – 4:30pm	RMC Zoom Link (above)	Briefing Call to review Zoom Logistics, Day's schedule and talking points

Thursday, February 11, 2021

RMC Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89905182986>

Meeting ID: 899 0518 2986

Toll Free Number: 1-877-853-5257

Time	Location	Description
8:30am – 9:00am	RMC Zoom Link (above)	Welcome and Briefing
9:00am – 10:00am	Zoom Invite Link: https://zoom.us/j/95605656539	Rural Caucus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chaired by Delegate Otto & Co-chaired by Delegate Arentz Topic: Broadband Rural Caucus Website Link: https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Meetings/Day/02112021
9:00am – 12:00pm	RMC Zoom Link (above)	Legislative Appointments <i>Zoom Breakout Rooms</i>
12:00pm – 12:30pm	RMC Zoom Link (above)	Debrief & Presentation of the 2021 Rural Maryland Day Proclamation, Citations from Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources, House Rural Maryland Resolution reading in celebration of RMC's 25 th Anniversary (Refer to the following Agenda for more details)



Rural Maryland Council (RMC)
Rural Maryland Day
February 11, 2021
12:00 pm to 12:30 pm
Zoom Teleconference

Agenda

- A. Welcome and Introduction John Hartline, Chair
- B. Proclamation of Rural Maryland Day
from Governor Larry Hogan Jeannie Haddaway Riccio,
Secretary, Department of Natural Resources
- C. Secretary's Citation Joe Bartenfelder,
Secretary, Department of Agriculture
- D. House of Delegates Resolution
Celebrating RMC's 25th Anniversary Pro Tem Sheree Sample-Hughes,
Chief of Staff, James Jervey
- E. Senate Resolution Celebrating RMC's
25th Anniversary Presented on Friday, February 12th by Senator
Addie Eckardt and Announced by
President Bill Ferguson
Watch on 2/12 on [Home Page \(maryland.gov\)](http://maryland.gov)
- F. Legislator Remarks John Hartline, Chair
- G. Legislative Meeting Feedback and
Closing Remarks John Hartline, Chair
- H. Adjourn

Rural Caucus

Zoom

Zoom Invite Link: <https://zoom.us/j/95605656539>

Website Link: <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Meetings/Day/02112021>

February 11, 2021

Agenda

9:00 Welcome	Delegate Otto
9:05 Guest Speakers	Drew Van Dopp, President & CEO Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Inc. Tyler Patton, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Inc. Charlotte Davis, Executive Director Rural Maryland Council John Hartline, Executive Director Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland
9:35 am	Discussion
10:00 am	Adjourn

Next Rural Caucus, March 11, 2021 at 9:00 am-10:00 am via Zoom



Best Practices for Attending an Online Meeting

- Prepare for your meeting in **advance**
 - Be sure to have log-in information and necessary documents prior to the meeting.
 - Remove distractions from the area where meeting attendance will be, if possible.
 - Turn off or silence your phone (if you aren't using it to call in)
 - Turn off email, text, or phone that may interfere with focus while attending.
- Log into the session a few minutes early so facilitator will know when everyone is in attendance.
- Avoid rustling papers, eating noisy foods or making other distracting noises in the background.
- Be careful not to interrupt others when they're speaking. Use the raise hand  icon in the tool bar (under reactions).
- Mute your mic when you aren't speaking. All participants will be muted upon entry.
- Using a headset for better voice over microphone and hearing the voices of others can be helpful.

Helpful Directives

- 1. We will be using the cloud-based video communication application Zoom for Rural Maryland Day. If you are not familiar with Zoom and/or do not have an account, learn more about it here [Zoom Meetings - Zoom](#). An account is free so be sure to set one up prior to this event.**
2. At the time of the meeting, click on the zoom link found on the agenda or in the email. You will be asked to type in the meeting ID provided. Note you can call in if you do not have access to a computer by using the toll-free phone number provided.
- 3. Once you join the meeting, you will be placed in a waiting room. This is the perfect time to 'Include your Team #' before your name by hovering your pointer over you name in the left-hand corner of your screen. Your Team is listed on the Rural Maryland Day Team handout that is part of this packet. Right click and choose rename. In front of your name please type your team number-eg. 'Team 1 Mary Hopkins'. Teams will be used throughout the day to help guide you and RMC staff to your specific breakout room once you enter the main session. *RMC staff will be able to help you if are unable to update your name at this time.***
4. RMC staff will allow you to join the main session from the waiting room. Once in the main session, you will be joining all of the participants for the day. The main session is where we will all gather for the welcome and briefing from 8:30 am to 9:00 am for the debriefing and proclamation from 12:00pm to 12:30pm.
- 5. Breakout Rooms: Each Team is associated with a breakout room that is labeled Team 1 through Team 6. You will be directed to enter your Team Room a few minutes before 9:00am. Unless otherwise assigned, you will stay in this 'Team Room' for the morning to meet one-on-one with legislators or their staff. RMC staff will welcome legislators in the main session area and will direct them to their 'Team Room'.**

- **Legislative appointments** are scheduled in 15-minute increments. Refer to the appointment scheduler for your Team to see who your Team is meeting with as you may have more time to talk with a legislator if you do not have back-to-back appointments.
-  This is the **HELP icon** that will be found in your tool bar at the bottom of your screen. You can click on this anytime to invite an RMC staff person to join the meeting if you need help.
- **Chat feature**-Found in your tool bar, you can use this to send a chat to everyone in the team meeting only. This might be helpful if you have a question you want to ask.
- **Leaving the meeting:** There is a blue icon that states 'Leave Room' on your tool bar. Once you click on this, you will have the option to **leave the break out room** and be taken back to the main session or you can exit Rural Maryland Day by clicking 'Leave Meeting'. A message will be sent to all the meeting rooms when it's time to return to the main session at 12:00pm.

Rural Caucus: Team 6 and other participants will leave the Rural Maryland Zoom meeting to join the Rural Caucus that will take place from 9:00AM to 10:00AM through a state issued zoom link. Once Rural Caucus is over, please return to the Rural Maryland Day zoom call, check in with RMC staff and join your team breakout room. Note if you do not want to join the Zoom Meeting for this event, you can watch live through the website link provided on the agenda.

Role of Team Leader and Alternate

- Each Team has been designated **Two Team Leaders**-(highlighted in bold on the Rural Maryland Day Team handout that is part of this packet)
- The role of the Team Leader(s) is to welcome and introduce the Legislator to Rural Maryland Day and the gathered participants. Note: RMC staff will be directing legislators to your 'Team Rooms'. There maybe a time that a legislator is running late or does not show up. Be patient and use the help icon to ask for an RMC staff member to join the meeting to help. Refer to downtime suggestions below.
- When the legislator appointment is over, the Legislator can click 'Leave Meeting' to exit. Please invite them to join back at noon to for the debriefing, closing remarks and proclamation if available.
- Keep time of the meeting, especially if you have back-to-back appointments.
- Ensure all team members are given the opportunity to speak with the legislator.
- Designate a team member to complete the follow-up forms (provided as a separated word document to participants) if a Legislator has a question or comment to share. Completed forms should be sent to RMC by email to rmc.mda@maryland.gov.
- If there is any down time, here are some suggestions:
 - Introductions
 - Review Talking points
 - Information exchange
 - Bathroom break

2021 Rural Maryland Day Teams

Team Leaders are highlighted in bold in the chart below. If you do not see your assignment, RMC staff will assign you a team on Rural Maryland Day.

Team 1		Team 2		Team 3	
First Name	Last Name	First Name	Last Name	First Name	Last Name
Kurt	Fuchs	Santo	Grande	Josh	Hastings
Lindsay	Thompson	Lucille	Walker	Amy	Yingling-Wallace
Kim	Abner	Barbara	Woolford	Julie	Bellamy
Richard C.	Blair	Mike	Arntz	Mindie	Burgoyne
Wynne	Briscoe	Joshua	Bokee	Lisa	Colavito Creason
Brigitte	Carty	Mary	Buffington	Keith	Cornish
Linda	Castrilli	Melissa	Carnes	Anne	Hairston-Strang
Marion	Fisher	Farmer	Chippy	Cherie	Krug
Susan	Harrison	Kia	Holder	Corinne M.	Pouliquen
Reza	Jafari	Kimberly	Kratovil	Donald	Stewart
Sherone	Lewis	Nancy	LaJoiCW	Jane	Thery
Julie	Oberg	Cassie	Shirk	Steve	Umberger
Clay	Stamp	Debbie	Simpkins	Garrett	Van Wicklen
Mark	Widmyer	Andrew	Sargent	Jamie	Williams
Dan	Rider	Beth	Hill	Gail	Yeiser
Mike	Binko	Gary	Hodge	Janey	Barrett
Elizabeth	Chung	Kristin	Brown	Jean	Miller
Theresa	Kuhns	Robert	Agee	Dave	Wooten
Karen	Adams			Alice	Settle-Raskin
Team 4		Team 5		Team 6	
First Name	Last Name	First Name	Last Name	First Name	Last Name
Scott	Warner	Chris	Benzing	John	Hartline
Matt	Teffeau	Bill	Valentine	Charlotte	Davis
Cheryl	Beulah	Dr. James	Bresette	Steven	Connelly
Terence	Collins	Chris	Comer	Tamara	Davis Brown
Gregan	Crawford	Ruthy	Davis	Sean	Looney
Amy	Crowding	Leigh Ann	Eagle	Hans	Schmidt
Lawrence	DiRe	Ann	Hillyer	Ryan	Snow
Regina	Faden	Edward	Knox	Valerie	Connelly
Rachel	Jones	La Fabian	Marshall	Michele	Guyton
Nan	Mann	Steve	McHenry	Mary	Handley
Julie	McGivern	Wendolyn	McKenzie	Gretchen	Hardman
Jerry	McLaurin	Tameka	Norman	Stacey	Harveyreid
Tereance	Moore	Adeyinka	Ogunlegan	Thomas	Reardon
Nicole	Morris	Lachelle	Scarlato	Carmella	Watkins
Gail	Owings	Martin	Schwartz	Darren	Jarboe
Susanne	Zilberfarb	Erin	Silva	Stephen	Schatz
Wayne	Rickert	Josh	Smith	Jeannie	Riccio
Jane	Sinclair	Zack	Tyndall		
Tony	Thakur	Roseanna	Vogt		
Shelby	Watson-Hampton	Weida	Stocker		
Vanda	Yamkovenko	Jackqui	Steele McCall		
Sandy	Pruitt	Patricia	Walters		
		Sherwin	Wells		
		Mike	McCartney		
		Don	Mulrine		

Team 1: Rural Maryland Day Appointment Schedule 2/11/2021

Meeting Time	Team 1
8:30AM	Briefing: Zoom Teleconference in Main Session
9:00 AM	Delegate Lily Qi, District 15, Montgomery County, Economic Matters Committee
9:15 AM	Senator Bryan Simonair STAFF (R), District 31, Anne Arundel County, EHEA
Senator Simonair Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID 962 07284039 Passcode 303641 https://zoom.us/j/96207284039?pwd=cnNpRkplcTJ6NEV4Z2Z1Sa1RHMmo1dz09	
9:30 AM	Delegate Mark Chang - Vice Chair Appropriations District 32 Anne Arundel County
9:45 AM	
10:00 AM	
10:15 AM	Delegate Kirill Reznik Meet w/ Chief of Staff, Sarian Holt, District 39 Montgomery County, Appropriations
10:30AM	
10:45 AM	Delegate Thiam, Meet w/ Chief of Staff, Jason Miller, District 2B, Washington County, Judiciary Committee
11:00 AM	Delegate Pat Young District 44B Baltimore County, Appropriations
11:15 AM	
11:30 AM	Senator Eckardt (R), District 37, Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot, Wicomico Counties, Budget & Taxation Committee
11:45 AM	Delegate Carol Krimm, Meet w/ Legislative Aide Carole Smith , District 3A, Frederick County, Appropriations Committee.
12:00pm-12:30pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference-Main Session

Team 2: Rural Maryland Day Appointment Schedule 2/11/2021

Meeting Time	Team 2
8:30AM	Briefing: Zoom Teleconference in Main Session
9:00 AM	Senator Paul Corderman, District 2, Washington County, Budget and Taxation Committee
9:15 AM	Delegate Korman, District 16, Montgomery County, Appropriations
9:30 AM	
9:45 AM	Senator Ronald Young, District 3, Frederick County, Budget and Taxation Committee
10:00 AM	
10:15 AM	
10:30AM	Delegate Johnny Mautz, District 37B, Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot and Wicomico Counties, Economic Matters Committee
10:45 AM	
11:00 AM	Delegate Eric Luedtke, Meet with Brad Fallon, Legislative Director , District 14 Montgomery County, Ways & Means Committee
11:15 AM	
11:30 AM	Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, District 20, Montgomery County, Economic Matters Committee
11:45 AM	
12:00pm-12:30pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference-Main Session

Team 3: Rural Maryland Day Appointment Schedule 2/11/2021

Meeting Time	Team 3
8:30AM	Briefing: Zoom Teleconference in Main Session
9:00 AM	Delegate Jefferson Ghrist, District 36, Kent, Queen Anne's, Cecil, and Caroline Counties, Appropriations Committee
9:15 AM	Delegate Jazz Lewis, District 24, Prince George's County, Appropriations Committee
9:30 AM	Senator Jason Gallion, District 35, Cecil and Harford Counties, EHEA Committee
9:45 AM	
10:00 AM	Delegate Kathleen Dumais, District 15, Montgomery County, Economic Matters Committee
10:15 AM	
10:30AM	
10:45 AM	Senator George Edwards, District 1. Garrett, Allegany, Washington Counties, Budget & Taxation Committee
11:00 AM	Delegate Benjamin Brooks, Meet w/ Chief of Staff, Kimberly Shiloh , District 10, Baltimore County, Economic Matters Committee
11:15 AM	
11:30 AM	Delegate Brian Crosby, District 29B, St. Mary's County, Economic Matters Committee
11:45 AM	Delegate Reid Novotny, District 9A, Howard and Carroll Counties, Appropriations
12:00pm-12:30pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference-Main Session

Team 4: Rural Maryland Day Appointment Schedule 2/11/2021

Meeting Time	Team 4
8:30AM	Briefing: Zoom Teleconference in Main Session
9:00 AM	Delegate Maggie McIntosh, District 43, Baltimore City, Appropriations Committee
9:15 AM	
9:30 AM	Senator Douglas Peters (D), District 23, Prince George's County Budget and Taxation Committee
9:45 AM	
10:00 AM	Delegate Steve Arentz, District 36, Kent, Queen Anne's, Cecil and Caroline Counties, Economic Matters Committee
10:15 AM	
10:30AM	District 13 Legislators: Senator Guzzone(Budget & Taxation Committee); Delegates Vanessa Atterbeary, Shane Pendergrass,and Jen Terrasa. Howard County
10:45 AM	
11:00 AM	Delegate Shaneka Henson District 30A, Anne Arundel County, Appropriations Committee
11:15 AM	
11:30 AM	Delegate Mckay, District 1C, Allegany and Washington County, Appropriations
11:45 AM	
12:00pm-12:30pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference-Main Session

Team 5: Rural Maryland Day Appointment Schedule 2/11/2021

Meeting Time	Team 5
8:30AM	Briefing: Zoom Teleconference in Main Session
9:00 AM	Senator Johnny Ray Salling, District 6, Baltimore County. Budget and Taxation Committee
9:15 AM	
9:30 AM	Tamika Winkler, Staff for Senator Cory McCray (D), District 45, Baltimore City, Budget & Taxation Committee
9:45 AM	
10:00 AM	Delegate Jesse Pippy, District 4, Frederick & Carroll Counties, Economic Matters Committee
10:15 AM	
10:30AM	Senator Marybeth Carozza, District 38, Somerset, Wicomico, & Worcester. EHEA Committee
10:45 AM	
11:00 AM	Cheif of Staff, Delegate Mark Fisher, District 27C, Calvert County, Economic Matters Committee
11:15 AM	
11:30 AM	Delegate Gilchrist, District 17, Montgomery County, Enviro & Transp.
11:45 AM	Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes, Chief of Staff James'Trap' Jervey, District 37A, Dorchester & Wicomico
12:00pm-12:30pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference-Main Session

Team 6: Rural Maryland Day Appointment Schedule 2/11/2021

Meeting Time	Team 6
8:30AM	Rural Caucus
9:00 AM	Rural Caucus
9:15 AM	Rural Caucus
9:30 AM	Rural Caucus
9:45 AM	Rural Caucus
10:00 AM	
10:15 AM	Join Team 1: Delegate Kirill Reznik Meet w/ Chief of Staff, Sarian Holt, District 39 Montgomery County, Appropriations
10:30AM	
10:45 AM	Join Team 1: Delegate Thiam, Meet w/ Chief of Staff, Jason Miller, District 2B, Washington County, Judiciary Committee
11:00 AM	Join Team 1: Delegate Pat Young District 44B Baltimore County, Appropriations
11:15 AM	
11:30 AM	Join Team 6: Delegate Barve, District 17 Montgomery County, Enviro. & Transportation Committee
11:45 AM	
12:00pm-12:30pm	Debrief: Zoom Teleconference-Main Session



RMC
Rural Maryland Council

Rural Maryland Council 2021 Legislative Priorities

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC), an independent state agency, brings together rural leaders, government officials at all levels, and the representatives of the non-profit and for-profit sectors to develop public policy solutions to the challenges unique to rural Maryland. Ultimately, our mission is to improve the quality of life while preserving the cultural heritage of Maryland's rural communities.

According to the Maryland Department of Legislative Services:

Fiscal 2020 General Fund revenues were below estimates by \$102 million or .5%. This under attainment was driven primarily by the sales tax which was under the estimate by \$317 million (6.4%) and fell 3.7% from Fiscal 2019. Retail sales, especially at restaurants and bars, were most directly impacted by the pandemic. **Overall, General Fund revenues are projected to rebound in Fiscal 2022, as the pandemic fades and economic growth continues to accelerate. Under the official forecast, Fiscal 2021 is expected to close with a \$547 million fund balance and Fiscal 2022 with a deficit of \$855 million. Structural deficits are forecast through Fiscal 2026.** The Legislature's Spending Affordability Committee recommended utilizing Rainy Day funds while capping the structural deficit at \$700 million.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF): The rural areas of the state continue to struggle to recover economically as reflected in unemployment and poverty rates. **To address these disparities, funding of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) remains a top priority.** Obtaining this critical support in the amount of \$6 million in funding for RMPIF would encourage necessary economic development and support necessary services. Given the state's fiscal condition due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we expect a 10% decrease in funding for a total of \$5,560,000 in FY 2022.

The RMC strongly supports continued state support of:

- **RMC Operating Expenses - (\$463,391)**
- **Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) - (\$150,000)**
- **Maryland Agriculture and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) – (\$2.735 million)**
- **Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program – (\$2.5 million)**

The RMC also strongly supports maintaining the current funding of the State's five regional councils at the historical legislative intention of \$200,000 each.

For the Maryland General Assembly's 2021 Legislative Session, the Rural Maryland Council supports the following legislative priorities:

Broadband and Infrastructure: Infrastructure improvements remain a key piece of place-making strategies in creating and retaining vibrancy in our rural communities including rural broadband expansion. The Council supports the Governor's FY 2022 Capital Budget Appropriation of approximately \$10 million for the Local Government Infrastructure Fund in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Other regulatory efforts such as adoption

of a “dig-once” policy and codifying the Office of Rural Broadband should be considered. The Council’s 2020 Rural Issues Survey found the lack of broadband to be the greatest concern in rural Maryland.

RMC also supports the distribution of transportation funding for Local Governments and expansion of heavy rail for commerce, transit, and tourism-related purposes.

Rural Economic Development: The Council supports efforts to encourage rural economic development in the form of tax credits to new or expanding businesses in rural Maryland. This includes tax credits for broadband expansion, services and a sales tax exemption of broadband equipment, and income tax credit for angel investments. These initiatives will attract and expand industry sectors other than cyber and biotechnology to all jurisdictions across the state, in part encouraging needed investment in the rural counties of Maryland.

Viable Agriculture, Aquaculture, Forestry & Rural Communities: Agriculture remains Maryland’s largest commercial economic sector and is incredibly important to our rural areas. Agriculture contributes approximately \$3.3 billion to the state economy supported 23,878 jobs and added nearly \$110 million in combined state and local tax revenue. The total economic impact of resource based industries in 2015 equaled \$23.3 billion, supported over 94,500 jobs, and generated nearly \$902 million in state and local tax revenue. RMC supports programs and policies that will sustain and enhance agricultural production and agritourism. RMC also supports policies that build strong rural communities:

- Adequate funding to ensure the retention and placement of University of Maryland Extension (College Park and Princess Anne) agricultural agents in each county and provide for appropriate agricultural research;
- Adequate funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund;
- Land preservation programs such as Program Open Space which funds Rural Legacy and the Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation;
- Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to ensure low-income workers and families access to basic necessities and providing an economic boost to neighborhood businesses;
- Core Smart Growth programs such as the Maryland Heritage Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit, Maryland Heritage Area Grants and the Community Investment Tax Credit;
- Expanded funding for the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Community Legacy, Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund; Neighborhood Business Works and Rental Housing Works programs;
- Energy policies that promote long-term, locally generated, renewable energy.

RMC is also interested in nutrient management regulations and land use decisions that may adversely impact agriculture production, particularly in regards to the expansion of utility-scale solar arrays without local input. The Council opposes any tax or fee imposed on agricultural products such as poultry.

Public Safety: Small rural volunteer fire and emergency agencies find it difficult to recruit and retain qualified trainees and employees. Efforts should be considered that allows rural emergency services access to workforce development tools.

Rural Health: Rural Maryland currently experiences a shortage of health care providers particularly in primary care, specialty areas, mental health and dental care. Moreover, rural populations are also overall older and in worst health than their suburban counterparts. RMC supports efforts to enable and expand telehealth to provide access to preventative, socio-behavioral and critical care services in rural areas.

For more information, visit the RMC’s website at: rural.maryland.gov

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Rural Maryland Council

FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET PRIORITIES

The rural areas of the State continue to struggle to recover economically.



RURAL MARYLAND PROSPERITY INVESTMENT FUND

REQUESTING LEVEL FUNDING OF \$6,000,000

Currently appropriated at \$5,071,339, a cut of almost 21%
Supports important programs in entrepreneurship, infrastructure and health care
Improves quality of life in rural areas

MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FUND

REQUESTING LEVEL FUNDING OF \$167,000

Currently funded at \$118,485
Builds capacity of rural-serving nonprofits in community development efforts

MARBIDCO

REQUESTING LEVEL FUNDING OF \$2,735,000

Currently fully funded at \$2,735,000
Also including the Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program of \$2,500,000

REGIONAL COUNCILS

REQUESTING LEVEL FUNDING OF \$1,000,000

\$200,000 for each of the State's five regional councils
Provide important support for regional economic development and planning efforts

RURAL BROADBAND

REQUESTING \$20,000,000

\$15,180,000 included in the FY2022 Capital Budget for the Local Government Infrastructure Fund
\$5,000,000 included in SB496 Senate Amendment for rural broadband

More information at rural.maryland.gov



Rural Maryland Day
February 11, 2021

Support for The Budget

Despite cuts being made to the FY22 Budget as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Rural Maryland still received funding for many crucial programs. This includes funding for both grant programs that the Council provides (RMPIF and MAERDAF) which provided 73 grants to nonprofits in FY22. RMPIF is designed to facilitate significant targeted investments in important economic and community development programs, promote regional and intergovernmental cooperation, and also provides funding for the five regional Councils. MAERDAF provides capacity building grants to rural serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges that promote statewide and regional planning, health care, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education.

Senate Bill 481/House Bill 588 (Fiscal Year 2022)

The Council Supports the funding for both of its grant programs, which includes \$5,071,339 for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) and, \$118,485 for the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistant Fund (MAERDAF). In addition to the funding for the grant programs, the Council also supports the \$5,235,000 in funding for the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO), as well as \$19,000,537 for the Rural Legacy Program



Rural Maryland Day
February 11, 2021

***SUPPORT FUNDING FOR RURAL MARYLAND PROSPERITY
INVESTMENT FUND***

Rural Maryland has the State's:

- Highest unemployment rates
- Highest poverty levels
- Lacks transportation options
- Lacks health care providers
- Lack of internet and broadband services

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund:

- Legislated in 2006
- Targeted investments to regional, nonprofit, and education
- Funded for the fifth time for Fiscal Year 2021
 - Awarded 73 grants totaling approximately \$6,010,510
- We thank Governor Hogan for including \$5,071,339 for RMPIF in the FY2022 budget

The requested \$6,000,000 in funding will support the following:

- Economic development in rural areas
 - Regional councils
- Infrastructure improvement projects
 - Broadband connectivity
 - Upgrades for water and wastewater treatment facilities
 - Improved access to transportation
 - Workforce housing
 - Commercial/industrial facility upgrades
- Entrepreneurship programs including:
 - Business training classes at our community colleges
 - Business plan competitions
 - Revolving loan funds
- Health care programs
 - Recruitment and retention of health care providers
 - Improving access to health and dental care, and mental and behavioral health



Rural Maryland Day February 11, 2021

SUPPORT FOR BROADBAND EXPANSION

The Rural Maryland Council supports the efforts to expand broadband access across the state, to close the digital divide and to provide adequate and reliable internet services to Marylanders. Having access to fast and reliable internet has become increasingly essential over the past several years, and even more so during the recent months of the pandemic. Many children must now rely on the internet to attend class and complete schoolwork, and many adults are now working from home. Other services such as telehealth visits have also become more popular during this time, allowing patients to have medical examinations administered from the safety of their homes. In a time of growing dependency on technology, these trends are certain to continue after the end of the pandemic.

Budget items:

- HB590 – State’s Capital Budget: \$15,180,000 in the Local Government Infrastructure Fund in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development for rural broadband projects.
- SB496/HB612 – Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families (RELIEF) Act: includes \$5,000,000 for rural broadband

Support with Amendments

SB66/HB97- Department of Housing and Community Development - Office of Digital Inclusion - Established (Digital Connectivity Act of 2021)

The Rural Maryland Council supports codification of the Office of Rural Broadband and expansion of the office to include the state’s suburban and urban areas. The Council supports efforts to address digital inclusion.

HB-43- Department of Information Technology - Office of Broadband and Joint Committee on Broadband

Like HB97/SB66, HB43 will expand and codify the Office of Rural Broadband to become the Office of Broadband. The Rural Broadband Assistance Fund is redirected to the Office of Rural Broadband. The Council recommends that the new Office of Broadband remain in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.



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February 11, 2021

Support For Healthcare and Telehealth

Rural Maryland is currently experiencing a shortage in healthcare providers, particularly in specialty areas, mental health and dental. In addition to having a lack of healthcare providers, Rural Marylanders tend to be both older and in worst health than their suburban counterparts. This puts many individuals of rural Maryland at a greater risk during the COVID-19 pandemic, making it less safe for them to leave their homes, especially to go to a high-risk location such as a medical facility. Since March of 2020 there has been a significant increase in the use of telehealth services. Telehealth has allowed for easier access, as well as more access for those who were originally unable to access the proper healthcare professional, because of a lack of healthcare providers in their area, or for other reasons such as transportation. The Rural Maryland Council supports efforts to enable and expand telehealth, tax credits for preceptors should also be expanded to include physicians' assistants.

RMC Supports:

SB3/HB123 - Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021

On March 5, 2020 a state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency was proclaimed as COVID-19 began to spread throughout the state. As Marylanders were advised to avoid contact with others as much as possible to stop the spread of the virus, certain telehealth capabilities were expanded to require health insurance companies to reimburse health care providers who were providing telehealth services to patients that would have otherwise been covered in person. SB003 will extend the telehealth definition to include audio only and remote patient monitoring services and allow distant site providers to provide these services to program recipients from any location which the service may be appropriately delivered.

SB393/HB551 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Coverage and Reimbursement of Telehealth Services

SB393/HB551 has similar goals to SB3/HB123, such as extending the telehealth definition to include audio only and remote patient monitoring services and allowing distant site providers to provide these

services to program recipients from any location which the service may be appropriately delivered. SB 393/HB551 differs slightly by putting an emphasis on mental health and substance use disorder services.

SB13- Certified Nursing Assistants – Certificate Renewal – Training Program Requirements

allow for Certified Nursing Assistants to renew their certification more easily by providing certain evidence of completion of a nursing assistant training program or a refresher training program if the nursing assistant did not complete 16 hours of required active practice. The State Board of Nursing will develop the programs and be responsible to adopt certain regulations.

SB56/HB191 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Psychiatrist and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Telemedicine Reimbursement – Sunset Termination.

This bill repeals termination for certain provisions of law relating to the eligibility of psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners who provide Assertive Community Treatment or mobile treatment services to Maryland Medical Assistance Program recipients in a home or community-based setting through telemedicine to receive reimbursement for the health care services from the Program.

SB92 - Income Tax - Credits for Preceptors in Areas With Health Care Workforce Shortages - Eligibility and Sunset Repeal

In 2016 Legislation passed for the Preceptor Tax Credit Program. This Program authorizes a credit against the State income tax for individuals who have served as a preceptor in certain preceptorship programs and work in certain areas of the State with a health care workforce shortage. Currently for a Nurse Practitioner to qualify for the credit towards the state income tax, they must complete a minimum of three rotations, each consisting of 100 hours of community-based clinical training. For a Physician to qualify for the same tax credit, they must complete a minimum of three rotations, each consisting of 160 hours. The Council supports the change in accordance with SB0092 to reduce the hours of each rotation from 160 to 100.

SB102 - Income Tax - Credits for Preceptors in Areas With Health Care Workforce Shortages

Presently under this Program, Physician Assistants are not included for the tax credit. Physician assistants are academically prepared and highly skilled health care professionals who provide a broad range of medical services in different clinical settings, under the supervision of a physician. The Credit would also be going to preceptors who are participating in these preceptorships with no compensation. The Council would like to see this Tax Credit Program include Physician Assistants.

To Be Heard at a Later Date

HB434 - Public Health – Telehealth – Health Care Practitioners and the Maryland Medical Assistance Program



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SUPPORT RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Council supports efforts to encourage rural economic development in the form of tax credits to new or expanding businesses.

SB246/HB360 -Income Tax - Angel Investor Tax Credit Program

The Rural Maryland Council supports SB 246 – Income Tax – Angel Investor Tax Credit Program. This bill creates a nonrefundable tax credit against the State income tax for investors who make qualified investments in Maryland innovation businesses. The credit is equal to 50% of the qualified investment, not to exceed \$50,000 for an individual or \$100,000 for married couples that file a joint return or a pass-through entity. The taxpayer can carry forward any unused credit for up to four succeeding tax years. The total amount of tax credit certificates issued by the Department of Commerce in each fiscal year cannot exceed the amount appropriated to the reserve fund in the State budget. The General Assembly’s intent is that the Governor appropriate at least \$5.0 million to the reserve fund in each year and that any money not expended within the fiscal year, roll over into the next fiscal year.

SB11 - Sales and Use Tax - Agricultural Purpose Exemption - Seedlings and Fruit Trees

The purpose of this bill is to expand the current sales use exemption to include the sale of seedlings and fruit trees for agricultural purpose to section Title 11 - Sales and Use Tax, Subtitle 2 – Exemptions § 11-201 to the Annotate Code of Maryland.

SB65/HB875- Electricity - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Qualifying Biomass (With Amendment)

The Council supports removing black liquor from the lists of qualifying biomasses in the state of Maryland. After the closure of the Luke Paper Mill, there is no longer a need to qualify black liquor as a biomass since there is no longer any production in the state. Currently, qualifying black liquor only results in money being spent for RECs that are not going towards Maryland businesses. While the closure of the Luke Mill eliminated the need for black liquor to be qualified as a biomass in the state, there is still a need for qualifying certain forest production residue as a biomass, as many forestry related businesses still benefit from the current forest production biomass qualifications.

SB153/HB376 - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Municipal Electric Utilities

Currently under Maryland law, municipal electric utilities (Munis) in Maryland are required to meet the same renewable energy portfolio standards as the investor owned utilities (IOUs), despite only being 1% of the size of the IOUs. These standards have resulted in increased prices to both the muni's and their customers. Senate Bill 153 would allow muni's to remain in the renewable energy portfolio standard program but would do so with adjusted caps. The caps put in place would directly save money for customers, taxpayers, and ratepayers

SB534/HB474 - Income Tax Credit – Wineries and Vineyards – Sunset Extension

SB534 would extend the current termination date for a credit against the State income tax for certain expenses related to wineries and vineyards from June 30, 2021 to June 30, 2026.

According to the 2020 Grow & Fortify publication, *Value-Added Agriculture in Maryland-An Economic Analysis*, in 2019, there were 105 licensed wineries in Maryland, working over 638 acres. The 2018 total value-added impact is estimated to be over \$200 million, supporting over 2,000 jobs and adding over \$10 million in combined state and tax revenue. Wineries are also contributing to an increase in tourism in the state, with 167,000 visitors annually, creating more than \$2.65 billion in total economic impact. This is helpful to areas such as Western MD that rely heavily on tourism, with western region wineries contributing \$71 million to the state economy in 2018, just behind the State's central region, which contributed \$95 Million.

HB269/SB673 - Department of Agriculture - Urban Agriculture Grant Program (Support with Amendment)

The purpose of this program is to increase the viability of urban farming and improve access to urban grown foods. The bill establishes the *Urban Agriculture Grant Program* in the Department of Agriculture. Additionally, it establishes *the Urban Agriculture Grant Fund* to provide grants to nonprofit organizations in Baltimore City to implement the Program. The Secretary of Agriculture is designated to administer this Fund; authorizing the distribution of up to \$400,000 from certain abandoned property funds to the Fund for each fiscal years 2023 through 2026. The Rural Maryland Council greatly supports this bill but would like it to be amended so that grant funds are available to urban agricultural producers across the state and not just Baltimore City.



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SUPPORT FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure improvements remain a key piece of place-making strategies in creating and retaining vibrancy in our rural communities including rural broadband expansion.

HB590 - Creation of a State Debt-Maryland Consolidated Bond Loan of 2021, and the Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loans of 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020

The Council supports the Governor's FY 2022 Capital Budget Appropriation of \$15,180,000 for the Local Government Infrastructure Fund in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. This funding source has been utilized by the Office of Rural Broadband for broadband expansion projects in partnership with local governments and private internet service providers.

SB362/HB649 - Transportation - Highway User Revenues - Revenue and Distribution

This bill alters the amount of capital grants based on highway user revenues that are required to be appropriated to Baltimore City, counties, municipalities by increasing the capital grants that shall be appropriated from the Transportation Trust Fund by 13.5% between fiscal years 2020 through 2024 and 14.6% for fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter.

SB496/HB612 - Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families (RELIEF) Act

Providing certain financing during fiscal years 2021 and 2022 for the purpose of relieving the adverse effects of the coronavirus pandemic; allowing, beginning with a certain taxable year, a subtraction under the Maryland income tax for certain unemployment insurance benefits; allowing, for certain taxable years, a subtraction under the Maryland income tax for certain coronavirus relief payments received by a person during the taxable year

As amended by the Senate, the RELIEF Act will authorize \$5,000,000 for the Office of the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to provide grants for the rural broadband projects. The bill also includes \$3,500,000 for the Maryland Agriculture and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation.

Program Open Space

An enduring legacy to enhance and protect quality of life in Maryland

PARTNERS for OPEN SPACE

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Lucille Walker

Trust for Public Land
Kent Whitehead

**Eastern Shore Land
Conservancy**
Jim Bass

What is Program Open Space?

Established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1969, Program Open Space is a suite of conservation programs that support state and local parks, preserve agricultural and natural lands, support historic preservation and heritage tourism, and help communities provide playgrounds, ball fields, trails, and other recreational opportunities.

The suite of programs includes: a.) Program Open Space; b.) the Rural Legacy Program; c.) the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation; and d.) the Maryland Heritage Areas Program. Together, these programs enhance and protect quality of life for all Marylanders.

How is Program Open Space funded?

Funding for Program Open Space is generated by a 0.5% tax on real property transfers in Maryland. This innovative tax policy balances the growth of real estate and development with the protection of open space and recreation opportunities.

Why is Program Open Space important?

Protecting nature: Statewide, Program Open Space has helped to protect more than 394,000 acres of land from development (source: [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#)), and an additional 100,000 acres have been protected through the Rural Legacy Program. These protected areas provide wildlife habitat, protect rivers and streams, provide clean air, and enhance the state's resilience against climate change.

Supporting state and local parks: Program Open Space directly supports state and local parks by protecting land to expand public access to parks and by providing funding for local park development in order to improve local recreation opportunities.

Preserving agricultural land: The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) has helped conserve 300,916 acres as farmland (source: [Maryland Department of Agriculture](#)). From 2001 to 2016, an estimated 102,700 acres of farmland were converted for development (source: [American Farmland Trust](#)).

Preserving Maryland history and heritage: The Maryland Heritage Areas program supports local heritage tourism in 13 Heritage Areas. Maryland Heritage Areas attract more than 20 million visitors each year, resulting in a \$2.4 billion annual economic value statewide.

What does this mean for my community?

Economic resilience: Parks, natural areas, and open space increase property values and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, a significant and growing sector of Maryland's economy. Maryland farms and forests are an important part of Maryland's rural economies. Heritage Areas support local tourism in every county of Maryland.

Public health: Parks and open space provide Marylanders the opportunity to recreate. Parks have been particularly important and highly demanded as a venue for safe recreation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Protected forested areas ensures water quality and air quality are protected.

Quality of life: Program Open Space contributes to a healthy environment, it creates places for recreation, it preserves farms (a local source for food), and it strengthens communities by helping to celebrate history and heritage. Program Open Space improves quality of life in Maryland.

Our Priorities for 2021: Equitable Recovery for Maryland

- Prevent residential and commercial **evictions and foreclosures** through rental and utility assistance, outreach, and mediation programs.
- Expand adequate housing options for **people experiencing homelessness** and are at grave risk for exposure to coronavirus.
- **Make the digital divide - a high priority for the legislature.** The divide is a barrier to economic equality, impacting both rural and urban areas, particularly low-income communities where lack of infrastructure and unaffordable internet service plans are major obstacles.
- Continue **affordable housing** production, preservation, and repair
- Provide **flexible sources of funding, enhanced technical assistance**, and improve data collection for small businesses and commercial corridors.
- **Support non-profits** by ensuring they have the necessary operating support to survive and flexibility, so they can provide needed services .
- Ensure that individuals **not served by federal programs** due to immigration status or other barriers **are served by more flexible local resources.**

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Program	FY 22 Gov. Hogan's Proposal	CDN Recommendation
Community Legacy	\$6 million	\$8 million
Main Streets	\$400,000	\$ 1 million
Rental Housing Programs	\$68.5 million	\$68.5 million
Local Government Infrastructure Fund	\$15.2 million	\$15.2 million
Maryland Community Action Agencies	\$0 million	\$1 million
Maryland Housing Counseling Fund	\$2 million	\$3 million