



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

Office of the Secretary

Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
Earl F. Hance, Secretary
Mary Ellen Setting, Deputy Secretary

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Internet: www.mda.maryland.gov

410.841.5700 Baltimore/Washington
301.261.8106 Washington, D.C.
410.841.5914 Fax
800.492.5590 Toll Free

April 1, 2013

Mr. Leslie Knapp, Jr.
Associate Director
Maryland Association of Counties
169 Conduit Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RECEIVED

APR 05 2013

MACo

Dear Les,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet today and discuss your concerns related to the Certainty legislation, Senate Bill 1029. Our discussion was very helpful in understanding the needs and issues of your organization related to information management and the means by which local governments remain informed.

While this bill provides for certain structure and detail related to developing and implementing an Agricultural Certainty program in Maryland, there will be additional details required to be articulated through regulation. It is our commitment to continue to work with you through the process to promulgate regulations to assure that your information needs are addressed. We believe that the bill, as passed by the Senate, provides the Department the authority to share relevant aggregated information at the county scale regarding agriculture land enrolled and the best management practices installed as part of the Program.

Although there are currently over 5,000 farm operations subject to nutrient management regulations in Maryland, we anticipate a much smaller enrollment in the Agricultural Certainty Program. Our initial estimates project between 25 and 50 farms seeking certification under the Program.

We appreciate your interest in Agricultural Certainty and look forward to working with you as we develop the Program.

Regards,

Earl F. Hance
Secretary