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**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

February 22, 2019

**SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SAFETY, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

Issues and Recommended Actions

1) The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends that MDA comment on why it has not submitted its fiscal 2018 annual report.

We apologize for the delay in publishing the FY 2018 annual report. All data for the report has been collected, and we are currently working with a designer on the layout and design for a final product. We expect to have the finalized version in the next few weeks. If there is a specific section you are interested in reviewing in the meantime, we are happy to provide that information in its current form.

2) DLS recommends that MDA comment on why the reports were submitted late.

Being a Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) that would include all agency reports, MDA believed our agency's report was required to be included in one master report. In the future, MDA will submit reports in a separate document to DLS.

3) DLS recommends that MDA comment on when the decision will be made whether to fund the evaluation, what funding it would use, and how it would incorporate the findings into PMT implementation.

The University of Maryland (UMD) has developed a proposal for a 3 to 5 year evaluation to field study the Phosphorous Management Tool (PMT). UMD has applied for a USDA grant in hope to be awarded this spring. In addition, MDA has 2 funding sources that will go to hiring one field technician and one post-doctoral researcher. One funding source comes from funding budgeted for the PMT Initiative in 2015 while the second funding source comes from an annual federal grant for nutrient management. Provided UMD is awarded the USDA grant, the research

should begin in 2019. Although the various elements of the PMT have been studied individually, this evaluation will be looking at all the elements as a whole already incorporated within the PMT.

4) DLS recommends that the \$200,000 in general funds and \$200,000 in special funds budgeted for the Nuisance Insects Program be deleted. In addition, DLS recommends that MDA comment on the magnitude of the threat that the spotted lanternfly poses to Maryland's agriculture.

MDA recommends that the funding for the Nuisance Insects Program remain in MDA's budget.

It is difficult to judge the magnitude of the spotted lanternfly on agriculture in Maryland at this time. It is a pest of grapes, apples stone fruit and hops, to name a few, and these agriculture products are grown in Maryland so they may see yield reductions if this pest continues to infest the state. In the highly infested areas of Pennsylvania there has been reduced yields in grapes and a small amount of vine loss.

5) DLS recommends that \$200,000 in general funds be restricted until the submission of a Maryland agriculture strategic plan, in coordination with the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of the demographics of farmers, the affordability and quality of food for consumers, the affordability of farms for the next generation of farmers, nutrient and sediment loading reductions for Chesapeake Bay restoration, and economic development programs supporting agriculture such as the work of the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation.

In order to accurately create a long-term agriculture strategic plan, MDA requires the information provided in the Census of Agriculture and the Farm Bill, which were both delayed in their finalization. MDA respectfully requests that \$200,000 in general funds not be restricted as the delays occurred at the Federal level.

6) DLS recommends that MDA provide the committees with the correct number of FTEs in the fiscal 2020 budget and discuss the changes it will make to avoid future errors in its FTE count.

The correct number of Contractual staff FTE for FY 2020 is 60.9. MDA had some technical difficulty while preparing the FY 2020 budget, which created the differences

referred to in the analysis. Going forward, the contractual FTE count should be accurate.