

Leadership That Works: Strengthening Maryland's Farming Families and Rural Communities

Goals and Values for Strengthening Maryland's Farm Families and Rural Communities

Farming communities serve as the foundation of Maryland's economy, values and traditions. Martin O'Malley and Anthony Brown will work with, not against, farmers in creating safe, sustainable agriculture policies. To help Maryland's farmers, we need a profitable, sustainable agricultural policy, and our state government must look to the future by balancing development with agricultural preservation. We must protect Maryland's valuable horseracing industry and ensure that its crown jewel, the Preakness, remains in our state. We need leadership that works to strengthen Maryland's farming families and rural communities.

Paths to Progress

As Maryland's next Governor, Martin O'Malley will:

- **Give Farmers a Real Seat at the Table for Decisions Involving the Economy, Land-Use, and Conservation.** Martin O'Malley will give Maryland's farmers a real seat at the table for the important decisions involving our state's economy and environment. Only through close cooperation and open dialogue will farmers and rural communities have a voice that will lead to progress for all of Maryland.
- **Reduce Health Care Costs for Farming Families and Agricultural Businesses.** Martin O'Malley understands that, like other businesses across the state, Maryland's farmers and agricultural businesses are suffering from high health care costs. O'Malley will work with farmers and agri-business leaders to find a solution to the soaring costs of health care. O'Malley will use such means as tax credits and a statewide insurance purchasing pool, in which small businesses can join together to negotiate lower rates, in order to make health care insurance more affordable for all families.
- **Address Shortages of Teachers and Nurses in Rural Maryland.** Martin O'Malley will address the shortages of teachers and nurses in rural Maryland and will create new incentives to attract quality professionals to underserved communities.
- **Fund the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO).** Martin O'Malley will fund the economic development and capital enhancement programs suggested by MARBIDCO, with an ultimate goal of making MARBIDCO financially self-sustaining by 2020. MARBIDCO is the corporation started by the State of Maryland to open new markets for farmers, help develop new technologies and make more capital and credit available to Maryland's farmers.
- **Work with Local Officials to Create a Statewide Agriculture Plan.** Martin O'Malley will bring together statewide planners, local officials, and agricultural representatives to create a statewide plan for growth that respects the land-use needs of modern farmers while balancing the growth needs of their communities.
- **Secure Maryland's Place as the Premier State for the Horse Racing Industry.** Martin O'Malley will do everything possible to protect horseracing in Maryland, including its crown jewel, the Preakness. O'Malley knows that over 18,000 jobs, including grain producers and breeders, depend upon horse racing, and he will work with the horse racing industry to promote profitability.

- **Support the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation.** Martin O'Malley supports the work of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to guarantee that farmers have enough farmable land to keep agriculture profitable and stay in business. By expanding Agricultural Preservation Districts and offering Agricultural Conservation Easements, the state will support those farmers who carry on Maryland's rich agricultural tradition.
- **Expand Conservation Programs.** Martin O'Malley will strengthen state programs that offer farmers real incentives to practice environmentally-friendly policies, such as Soil Conservation Districts. Since the entire state benefits from conservation-minded farmers, we must create incentives to promote low-impact agriculture.
- **Fully Fund Program Open Space.** Martin O'Malley will fully fund Program Open Space to protect Maryland's parkland and natural resources from the pressures of sprawl. Uncontrolled development threatens both the environment and Maryland's farming population, and, unlike the current administration, O'Malley will guarantee that money promised to preserve open space is used for that purpose.
- **Make Maryland the Leader in Combating Avian Flu, and Improve Agri-Security.** Martin O'Malley will work to get Maryland its share of the \$3.9 billion the federal government has set aside for vaccine production. With the nation's brightest scientists and best hospitals, Maryland needs strong leadership to bring it to the forefront in avian flu research, vaccine production and agri-security.

A Record of Progress

- Martin O'Malley instituted a five-year property tax cut that has reduced property tax rates to a thirty-year low.
- Martin O'Malley has been an advocate for open space programs and clean air and water initiatives to help protect Maryland's farms and preserved lands.
- Martin O'Malley secured innovative partnerships with groups like Adopt-a-Waterway and the Baltimore Urban Watershed Cooperative to direct public and private dollars into the watershed restoration campaign to protect the Bay and other important waterways.

Maryland Can Do Better

- Bob Ehrlich imposed new property taxes on Maryland families, threatening the future for many Maryland farms.
- Bob Ehrlich has robbed funds from Program Open Space and gave his developer friends a green light to increase sprawl and threaten agriculture.
- Bob Ehrlich favors massive development on the Eastern Shore, threatening valuable farms and increasing traffic and pollution. Bob Ehrlich's actions are threatening a way of life on the Eastern Shore.
- Bob Ehrlich waited until an election year to host his first promised agricultural forum.

**Bob Ehrlich and Agriculture – No Goals. Failed Leadership.
A Stronger Maryland Can Do Better.**

Martin O'Malley and Anthony Brown – Leadership That Works