

HOUSE BILL 974

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By: **Chair, Environmental Matters Committee (By Request – Departmental – Agriculture)**

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2010

Assigned to: Environmental Matters

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 17, 2010

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Nutrient Trading – Voluntary Agricultural Nutrient Credit Certification**
3 **Program**

4 FOR the purpose of authorizing the State Department of Agriculture to establish
5 requirements for the voluntary certification and registration of nutrient credits
6 on agricultural land; establishing certain certification and registration
7 requirements; authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to suspend or revoke the
8 approval or certification of certain credits under certain circumstances;
9 preserving the authority of the Department of the Environment to establish
10 eligibility and other requirements for use of nutrient offset credits under any
11 State or federal permit or other regulatory program; providing for the
12 application of this Act; declaring the intent of the General Assembly; and
13 generally relating to the establishment of agricultural nutrient credit
14 requirements.

15 BY adding to

16 Article – Agriculture

17 Section 8–901 through 8–904 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 9.
18 Voluntary Agricultural Nutrient Credit Certification Program”

19 Annotated Code of Maryland

20 (2007 Replacement Volume and 2009 Supplement)

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
22 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 **Article – Agriculture**

2 **SUBTITLE 9. VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT CREDIT CERTIFICATION**
3 **PROGRAM.**

4 **8–901.**

5 **THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:**

6 **(1) VOLUNTARY NUTRIENT TRADING PROGRAMS PROVIDE AN**
7 **INNOVATIVE AND COST-EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO ENHANCE WATER AND AIR**
8 **QUALITY AND ACHIEVE ADDITIONAL WATER AND AIR QUALITY BENEFITS; AND**

9 **(2) THE AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT CREDIT CERTIFICATION**
10 **PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE AUTHORIZES THE**
11 **DEPARTMENT TO VERIFY, CERTIFY, AND REGISTER AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT**
12 **CREDITS IN SUPPORT OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC NUTRIENT TRADING ACTIVITIES**
13 **BETWEEN THE BUYER OF NUTRIENT CREDITS AND THE FARM OWNER OR**
14 **OPERATOR THAT AGREES TO BE PAID AND IMPLEMENT BEST MANAGEMENT**
15 **PRACTICES TO REDUCE AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT RUNOFF AND EMISSIONS.**

16 **8–902.**

17 **(A) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR THE**
18 **VOLUNTARY CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION OF NUTRIENT CREDITS ON**
19 **AGRICULTURAL LAND, AS DEFINED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS**
20 **AND TAXATION.**

21 **(B) CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED**
22 **UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE:**

23 **(1) APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR**
24 **CERTIFICATION;**

25 **(2) STANDARDS FOR QUANTIFYING NUTRIENT CREDITS**
26 **RESULTING FROM ANY EXISTING OR PROPOSED AGRONOMIC, LAND USE, AND**
27 **STRUCTURAL PRACTICE;**

28 **(3) REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING THE DURATION AND**
29 **MAINTENANCE OF CREDITS; AND**

30 **(4) ESTABLISHMENT OF A CREDIT REGISTRY ACCESSIBLE TO THE**
31 **PUBLIC.**

1 **8-903.**

2 ON NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD, THE SECRETARY MAY
3 SUSPEND OR REVOKE THE APPROVAL OR CERTIFICATION OF CREDITS
4 APPLICABLE FOR THE PROGRAM FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SUBTITLE OR FOR A
5 VIOLATION OF ANY REGULATION ADOPTED BY THE SECRETARY UNDER THIS
6 SUBTITLE.

7 **8-904.**

8 NOTHING IN THIS SUBTITLE IS INTENDED TO SUPPLANT OR LIMIT THE
9 AUTHORITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT TO ESTABLISH
10 ELIGIBILITY AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF NUTRIENT OFFSET
11 CREDITS UNDER ANY STATE OR FEDERAL PERMIT OR OTHER REGULATORY
12 PROGRAM.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the provisions of this Act
14 may not be construed to affect the rights and obligations of any party to any
15 agreement to preserve land for agricultural use under any State, local, or private
16 program for the preservation of agricultural land.

17 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That it is the intent of the
18 General Assembly that the authority of the State Department of Agriculture to
19 establish requirements for the voluntary certification and registration of nutrient
20 credits on agricultural land, as provided by this Act, be retained by the State
21 Department of Agriculture.

22 SECTION ~~3~~ 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take
23 effect June 1, 2010.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.