November 10, 2026

The Honorable Wes Moore
Office of the Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925

Dear Honorable Governor Moore,

In a time of budget pressures, Maryland must make investments in well-run programs that deliver results for its residents and environment. Since its creation in 2013, the Animal Waste Technology Fund (AWTF) has awarded more than $15 million in taxpayer dollars to 14 projects, with a quarter of those projects failing or stalled. At least half of awards have gone to corporations and entrepreneurs rather than directly to Maryland farmers. The program has produced scarce evidence that its investments have produced measurable reductions in nutrient

pollution, improvements in water quality, or public health benefits, while raising serious environmental justice concerns.

The undersigned 25 organizations urge you to eliminate funding for the Animal Waste Technology Fund in the next budget.

The intent of the AWTF was to facilitate the use of economically viable technologies that could reduce nutrient pollution from animal waste. However, a 2023 assessment of the program by the University of Maryland (UMD) noted that the various technologies supported by the fund face significant economic barriers, including high upfront costs and expensive operating and maintenance costs—with anaerobic digesters being particularly costly. The assessment also notes that the economic viability of these projects relies on continued taxpayer subsidies. In 2024, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) similarly acknowledged that some of these technologies are “not economical” to private vendors without government support. The Animal Waste Technology Fund does not create self-sustaining ventures and instead require ongoing taxpayer subsidies**.**

The AWTF also lacks sufficient transparency and accountability for its environmental results. MDA does not publish information showing measurable nutrient reductions, water quality improvements, or even the operational status of some funded projects. Moreover, the technologies themselves do not eliminate the waste, but instead convert it to other nutrient-dense products that still require careful management. As the UMD Assessment explains: Anaerobic digesters, and other technologies for converting animal waste to energy, do not eliminate the need for a land base for nutrient application, as those technologies leave nutrient-dense residuals. More than a decade into the program, the AWTF still cannot adequately demonstrate environmental benefits and has failed to address the underlying problem: the production of more manure—and the nutrients it contains—than surrounding agricultural land can sustainably absorb.

The AWTF also raises significant environmental justice concerns. According to an analysis by Friends of the Earth, Sentinels of the Eastern Shore, and Concerned Citizens Against Industrial CAFOs, 10 of 13 projects that received funding through the Animal Waste Technology Fund were sited in communities identified as overburdened including three in communities considered both overburdened and underserved. Waste-conversion facilities can introduce additional industrial activity, truck traffic, air pollution, and other potential environmental burdens. Yet the AWTF lacks safeguards for communities that may be affected by AWTF-funded facilities and communities are required to fight back against an industry receiving millions of dollars from state and federal programs.

Maryland has better uses for these limited public resources. Rather than continuing to subsidize private waste-technology ventures. The state should invest more in programs with a proven track record of directly benefitting Maryland farmers and reducing nutrient pollution. Maryland has several conservation programs that are consistently oversubscribed. Maryland could also provide technical assistance and financial support for farmers seeking to transition

away from AFO-scale livestock and poultry production toward specialty crop production or lower-density, pasture-based options.The state should also invest in stronger oversight and enforcement of pollution requirements for concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), including adequate staffing for inspections, compliance monitoring, and enforcement actions to hold polluting facilities accountable. These investments would help keep public resources focused on Maryland's farmers and its economy while supporting approaches designed to prevent pollution at the source.

As Maryland faces difficult budget choices, continuing to fund a program with a record of failed and stalled projects, inadequate economic viability, little publicly demonstrated environmental return, and serious environmental justice concerns is not justifiable. iWe respectfully urge you to not fund the Animal Waste Technology Fund in the next budget, begin to sunset the program, and ultimately repeal it. Instead, Maryland should direct resources toward proven conservation practices, stronger pollution prevention, and direct support for Maryland farmers.

Thank you,

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Animal Legal Defense Fund
CATA – The Farmworkers Support Committee
Center for Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health (CEEJH Inc.)
Center for Progressive Reform
Clean Water Action
Climate Communications Coalition
Concerned Citizens Against CAFOs
Earthjustice
Echotopia, LLC.
Families Not Refineries
Farm Aid
Food Animal Concerns Trust
Food & Water Watch
Friends of the Earth
Indivisible Howard County MD
Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVA)
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)
Maryland Latinos Unidos
Maryland Legislative Coalition – Climate Justice Wing
NAACP Wicomico County
Sentinels of Eastern Shore Health
Socially Responsible Agriculture Project
Sussex Health & Environmental Network

CC: Manny Welsh, Chief of Staff
Yaakov "Jake" Weissmann, Secretary, Department of Budget and Management
Kevin Atticks, Secretary, Maryland Department of Agriculture
Will Tilburg, Chief Legislative Officer to Governor Wes Moore

Meghan Conklin, Chief Sustainability Officer to Governor Wes Moore
Chichi Nyagah-Nash, Deputy Chief of Staff
Honorable Senate President Bill Ferguson
Honorable Speaker Joseline Peña-Melnyk
Members of the Senate and House of Delegates