



## Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts

209 Jarman Branch Drive • Centreville • MD • 21617

443-262-8491 • [Lindsay.mdag@gmail.com](mailto:Lindsay.mdag@gmail.com)

[www.mascd.net](http://www.mascd.net)

February 14, 2017

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) hosted their annual legislative luncheon in conjunction with their winter meeting on Tuesday, February 7, 2017. Representatives from all of the 24 soil conservation districts in Maryland were joined by over 60 legislators at this event. Soil conservation districts took this opportunity to highlight the importance of state support for the districts and the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost Share Program.

Soil conservation districts (SCDs) are politically independent subdivisions of the state where a unique partnership exists between the state, federal and local governments in furtherance of conservation goals. SCDs are the local delivery system for the state's agricultural conservation programs to install best management practices (BMPs) on farms and also review and approve urban erosion and sediment control plans to conserve our natural resources and protect the Bay. SCDs also help secure financial assistance for farmers to install practices to meet the Watershed Implementation Plan goals under the Total Maximum Daily Load.

The staff of the SCDs are one of the most cost effective tools to reduce nutrients and sediments from entering the Chesapeake Bay. In 2016, the soil conservation districts staff achieved the following: Planned and helped implement 2,730 BMPs; Assisted farmers in obtaining approximately \$49 million in conservation grants to install BMPs; Signed up and inspected a record of 501,204 acres of cover crops; Developed 1,247 conservation plans for 62,511 acres of land and updated another 784 plans to protect an additional 47,472 acres; and Reviewed 11,130 erosion and sediment control plans for construction projects on 37,215 acres.

The Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program (MACS) provides funding to help farmers to install conservation projects on their farms to control soil, erosion, reduce nutrient runoff, and protect water quality. In 2016, SCDs helped farmers install 2,620 conservation practices using MACS funding, preventing approximately 3 million pounds of nitrogen and 121,000 pounds of phosphorus from entering the Chesapeake Bay.

Legislators from all over the state expressed their understanding of the importance of the technical assistance that the districts provide to farmers, landowners, and the urban community.

For more information, contact Lindsay Thompson, Executive Director, 443-262-8491, email: [Lindsay.mdag@gmail.com](mailto:Lindsay.mdag@gmail.com).

###