

**ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE BUDGET**

**BILL NUMBER: 55-26**

**INTRO. DATE: June 15, 2026**

**FISCAL NOTE**

**BILL: Subdivision and Development – Agricultural and Woodland Land Preservation – Real Property Taxes – Land Preservation Tax Credit**

**SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION**

This bill updates several provisions of the Agricultural and Woodland Land Preservation Program. The program offers financial support for property owners who want to keep their land in working farms and forests, in the form of easement purchases and property tax credits.

- The bill updates references to County Code to account for changes in Code since 1999.
- It applies Agricultural Tax Credit directly to properties in agricultural preservation easements. Landowners will need to renew the tax credit every 10 years, but will not need to sign Agricultural District Agreements, so it reduces paperwork and redundancy.
- It allows properties under Rural Legacy Conservation Easements to receive the Agricultural Land Property Tax Credit. Under current County Code, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and County agricultural preservation easement properties already are eligible. State enabling legislation was passed in 2026 to allow Rural Legacy easement properties to also be eligible.
- It shifts some items in the current regulations into the County Code, including the eligibility criteria and easement purchase price. It standardizes the minimum lot size at 30 acres. It provides for applicants to submit a professional soil assessment.
- It standardizes the easement price at 70 percent of fair market value of the land. This is an increase from the current 60 percent of fair market value in County regulations, but lower than the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) cap of 75 percent of fair market value.
- It allows subdivision of property under easement for agricultural purposes within specified criteria.
- It clarifies the conditions under which a property owner may obtain a release of an unrestricted lot, and specifies the reimbursement due to the County.
- It updates the priority ranking system.
- It provides that the Planning and Zoning Officer shall prepare and maintain administrative policies and procedures related to the implementation of the program, with review by and input from the agricultural preservation advisory board. The policies and procedures are to be posted on the county website and publicly available upon request.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Operating Budget – Personal Services: No effect. This bill updates an existing County program. The changes are not expected to alter the workload of program staff.

Operating Budget – Other Operating Costs: No effect. This bill updates an existing County program. The changes are not expected to affect the operating budget.

Capital Budget: No effect. The Agricultural and Woodland Preservation Program uses funds from Capital Projects C443400 (Agricultural Preservation Program) and C543800 (Rural Legacy Program). The Program will continue to use funds as approved by the County Council in the Capital Budget. This legislation will not have an impact on the Capital Budget.

Revenues: The legislation extends an existing property tax credit in County Code 4-2-302, which in effect decreases real property tax revenue..

The property tax credit currently applies to agricultural lands with conservation easements through the County Agricultural and Woodland Preservation program (authorized in County Code Article 17, Title 10) and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (Agriculture Article, Title 2, Subtitle 5, of the State Code), but it does not apply to properties with similar conservation easements under the Rural Legacy Program ( Established Under Title 5, Subtitle 9A of the Natural Resources Article of the State Code).

The Maryland General Assembly enacted Chapters 619 and 620 of 2026 (Senate Bill 851 and House Bill 320) that enable Anne Arundel County to provide a property tax credit to property under a Rural Legacy Conservation Easement.

There are currently 22 properties in Anne Arundel County with conservation easements under the Rural Legacy program. The total tax credit, if all of those properties applied and received the tax credit, would be \$73,612.95 based on the current fiscal year assessments and tax rates.

Indirect and future fiscal effects: None.

  
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**Chris Trumbauer**  
**Budget Officer**

6/8/2026  
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**Date**

Prepared by: Neil Bergsman, Legislative Fiscal Policy Analyst  
cc: Billie Penley, Controller