Farmers Respond to Governor O'Malley

Posted by petehurrey On 07/17/2008

On his penultimate stop for the day, Gov. Martin O'Malley and Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown, along with Sen. Roy Dyson and Del. Sally Jameson met with farmers at Bowles Farm in Clements.

During the visit, Gov. O'Malley spoke with a large gathering of farmers and concerned citizens about the need for family farms, preserving Maryland’s green footprint and better land management practices.

“This administration has as its theme, increasing the sustainability of the middle class, small business, and family farms,” said O'Malley.

Sen. Dyson spoke after O'Malley and applauded the efforts of farmers across the region. “Every one of us needs a farmer three times a day,” said Dyson.

The governor also took time to mention tomorrow's launch of the yearly “Buy Local Challenge,” congratulating Christine Bergmark, Executive Director of the Agricultural Development Commission and Del. Jameson, Ag. Commission board member for their hard work. “The program is now recognized on a national basis,” said the governor.

Jameson stated that locally, the Ag Commission is involved in some exciting new agricultural research. “We are looking into new crops,” said Jameson. She stated that there is now a real possibility that the region can sustain the production of catnip, a good cash-producing crop.

“We also have farmers that are looking into the possibility of becoming solar and wind energy farms,” said the delegate from Charles County.

At the end of the speech, O'Malley opened the floor up for questions. One farmer asked about the state's view on wind energy production. Another stated that the roadblocks currently in place for height restrictions precluded any real wind-energy efforts.

Bergmark stated that there needed to be a process in place to allow energy producers to sell to the power grid. O'Malley stated that the Agriculture Secretary Richardson would be looking into the situation.

A final question asked about the state’s position on the expending deer population and the devastation of crops by the voracious feeders, especially pointing out that Department of Natural Resource lands needed to be addressed in order to reduce the threat from white tail deer to local crop revenues.

Chandler Johnson, a farmer from Virginia who came specifically to hear about the deer problem stated, “The deer in Virginia are destroying a lot of crops and I came to see how Maryland was handling the process.”

O'Malley again stated that the problem would be brought to the attention of those at DNR responsible for administration of the rules and regulations pertaining to deer.

After thanking all in attendance, O'Malley, Brown and Dyson were treated to a basket full of local produce and the weary entourage headed for their last stop of the day at Patuxent NAS.