

# FORESTED BUFFERS

What Changes in Policy Can Expand and Accelerate our Efforts?

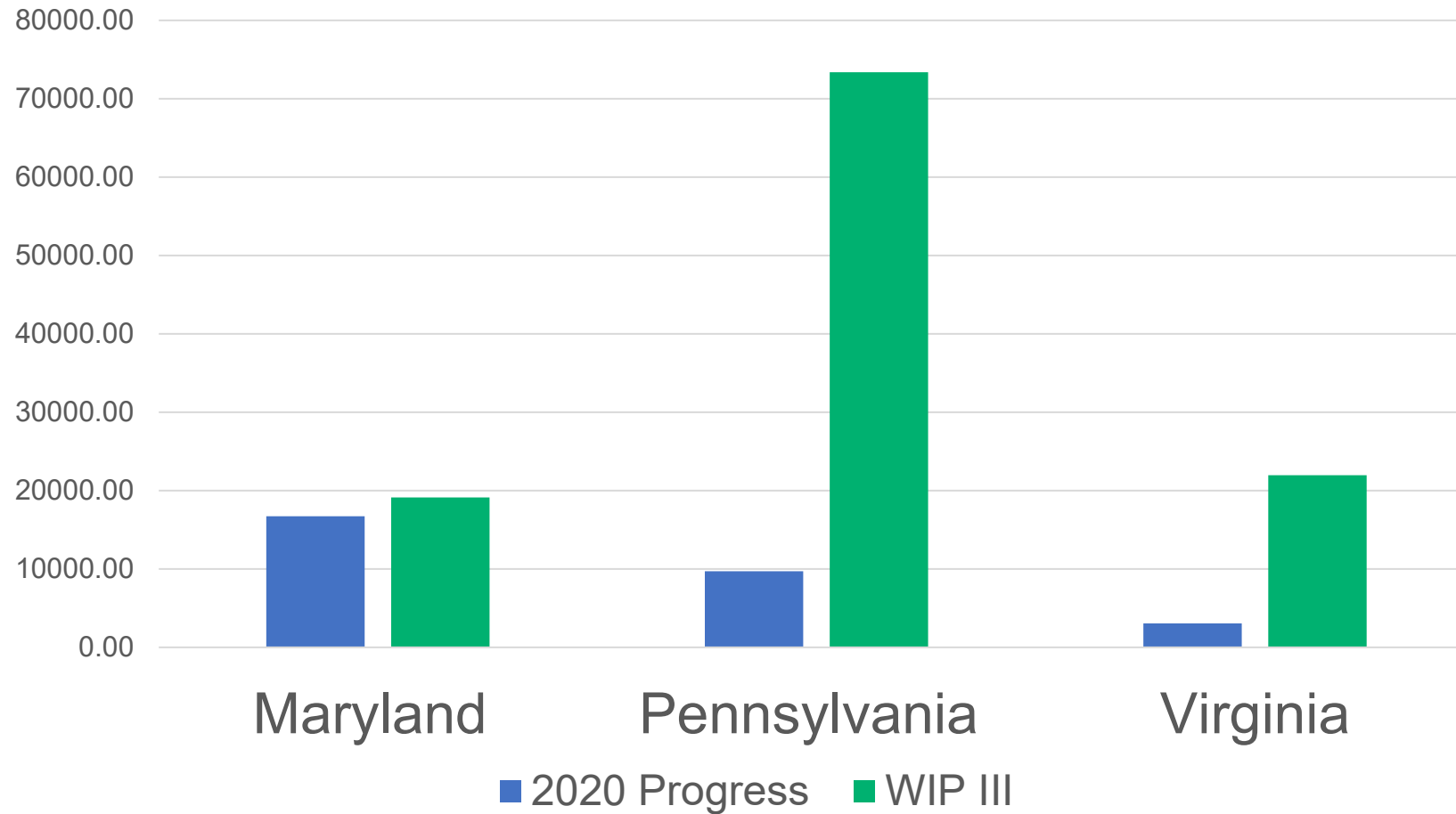
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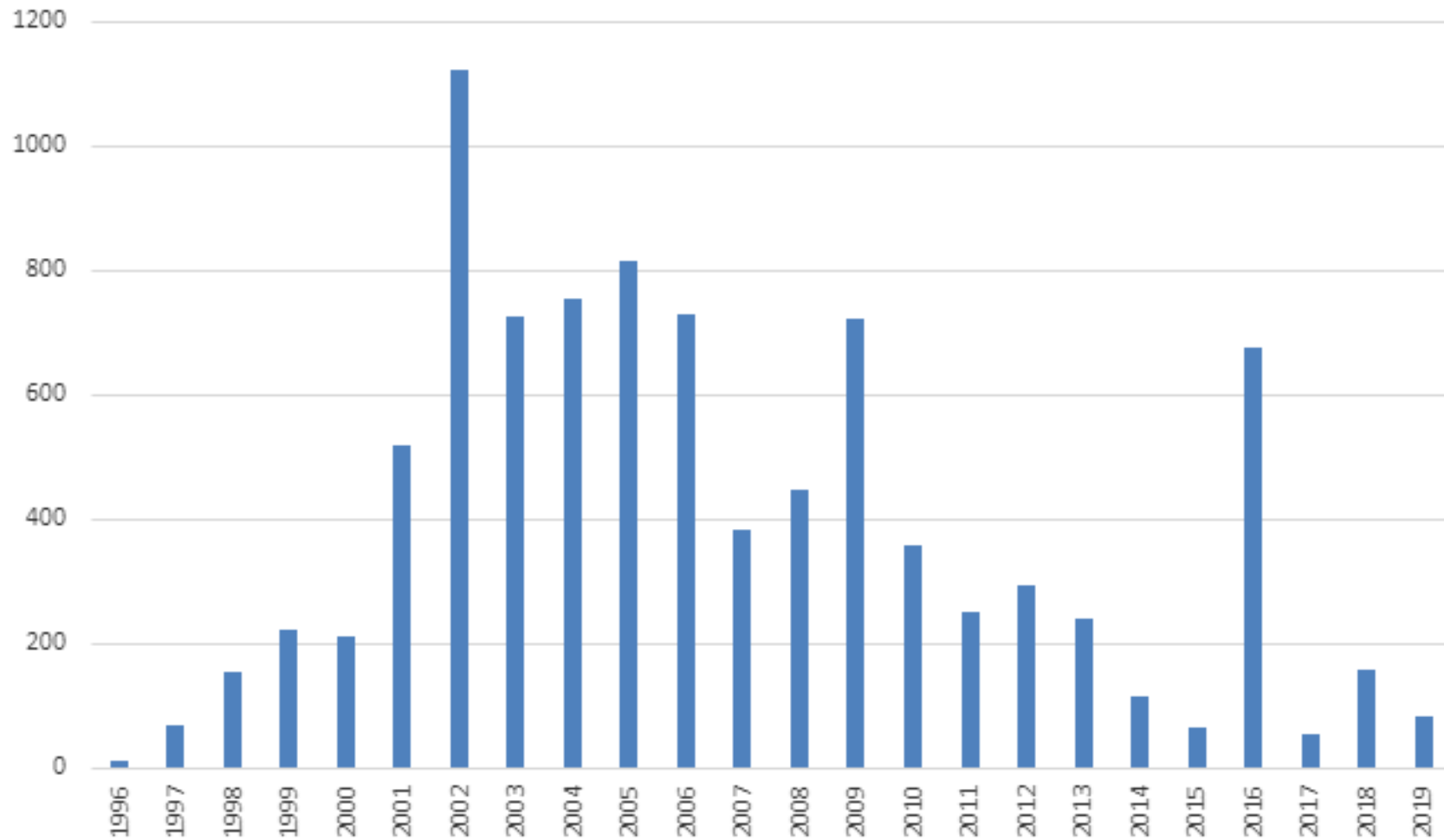
## Forested Buffer Implementation on Ag Land (ac)



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# 2020 Progress versus WIP Targets

Miles of Riparian Forest Buffers Planted in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, 1996-2019



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CREP drove early implementation

- Low hanging fruit was picked
- Issues with maintenance of buffers
- Lack of agency (USDA) support for CRP/CREP
  - Inconsistency in program
  - Lack of technical assistance
  - Frustration among state partners



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What happened??

- Buffer management payment to pay full costs of maintenance
- Increased cost-share for associated practices to reflect market rates
- Partial incentive payments when component practices are completed
- Ability to keep program going even if state contribution is temporarily disrupted

*Strategy: Put pressure on USDA to administratively implement most/all of these changes without having to amend state CREP agreements and increase outreach and technical assistance*



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## Changes to CREP in 2018 Farm Bill



## News Room

- [Bird Flu Blog](#)
- [Bird Flu Press Kit](#)
- [MDA Blog](#)
- [Governor's Agriculture Hall of Fame](#)
- [Pending Regulations for Public Comments](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [MDA Public Meetings Calendar](#)

## Department Offers Maryland Farmers One-Time \$1,000/Acre Signing Bonus for CREP Enrollment

October 19, 2021



**ANNAPOLIS, MD** — The Maryland Department of Agriculture has increased its one-time signing bonus to \$1,000 per acre for eligible farmers and landowners who install forest buffers along qualifying stream corridors through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Farmers and landowners with new contracts for CREP practice [CP22 riparian buffers](#) effective on or after **October 1, 2021**, are eligible. All other CREP contracts and re-enrollments remain eligible for a \$100 per acre signing bonus.

## Contact Information

If you have any questions, need additional information or would like to arrange an interview, please contact:

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- *Based on 2021 climate change legislation*

## Other thoughts:

- Require buffers to participate in permanent agricultural easement program



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# Maryland Policy

- Current incentives are not sufficient to encourage producers to implement buffers at the rate that is needed
  - Build on and enhance existing state incentives for buffers that are linked to stream fencing e.g., MD sign up bonus, increase existing per acre incentives
- Ensure the State Soil and Water Conservation Board adopts the recommendation to add costs of buffer maintenance to the list of VACS approved practices.



- Consider a one-time signing incentive ala the MD program \$1,000/acre
- Allow state cost-share dollars to be used for CREP buffers 35' width or more in watersheds with nutrient/sediment impairments (current policy restricts funds to buffers 50' width or more)
- Support and enhance efforts like those in Lancaster County focused on providing financial and technical support for buffer maintenance



# Thank you!



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