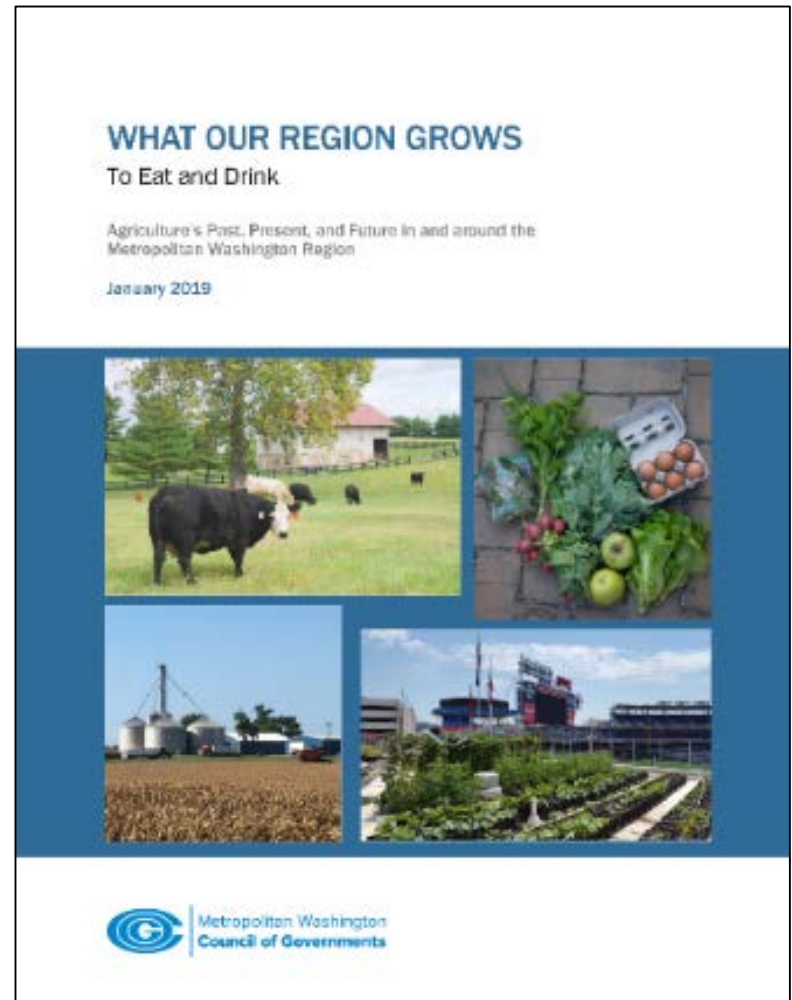


# Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee (CBPC) Ag Task Force Update

Formed Ag Task Force in March to assess regional interest and capacity to implement recommendations from COG's *What Our Region Grows* report.

- Comprised of six elected leaders from CBPC

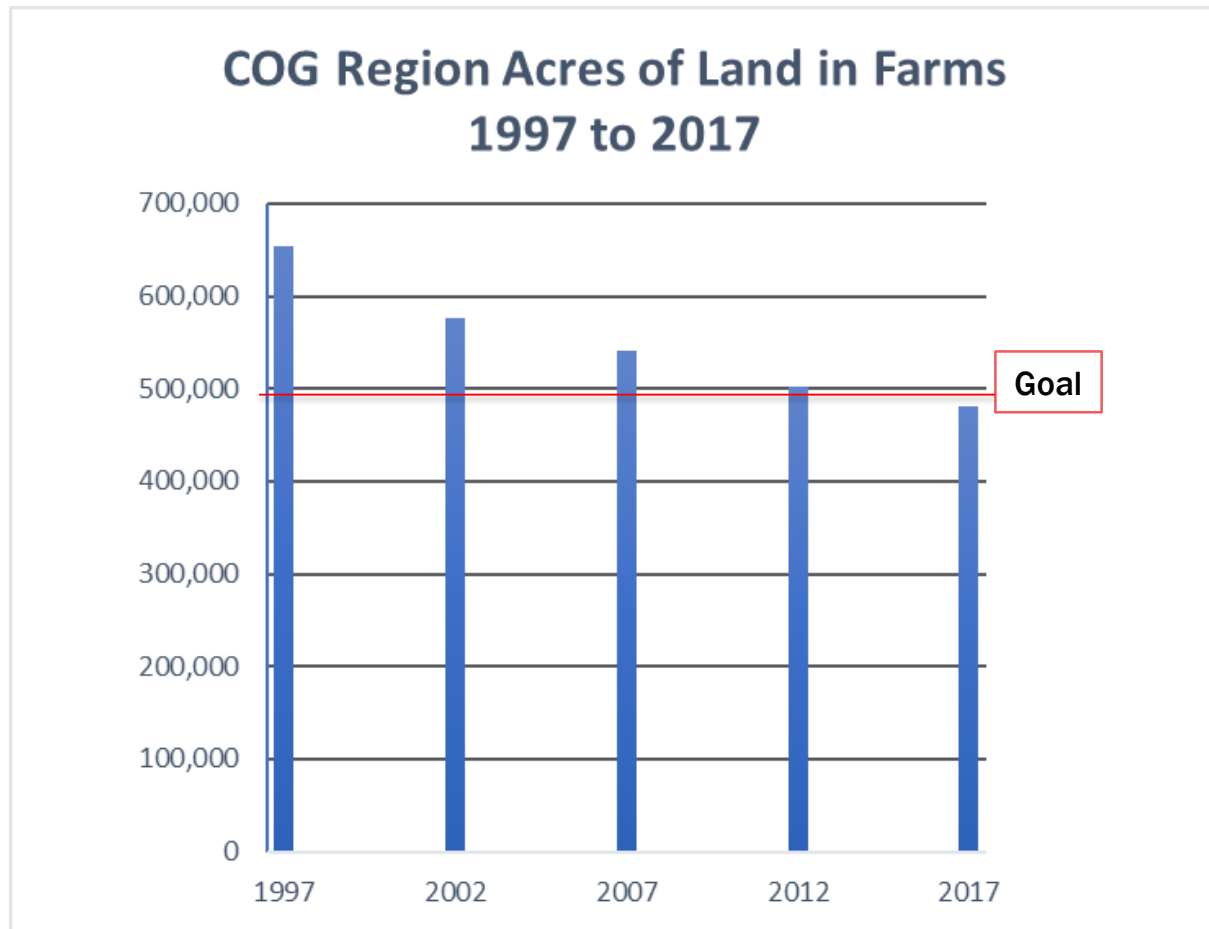
COG staff conducted interviews with other regional leaders from MD, DC, and VA.



# Critical Timing of Ag Task Force Work

**Region Forward:  
Maintain more  
than 497,500  
acres of land in  
farms**

2017 Census of  
Agriculture shows  
**480,281 acres**  
for the COG  
Region



# Land, Soil and Climate Nexus



## Benefits of Healthy Soils

- Improved water holding capacity
- Sequester carbon and reduce GHG emissions
- Functions as a biological system; habitat for important soil organisms
- Long-term sustainability of agriculture
- Enhance crop quality
- Improve resistance to weeds and pests

Source: COG



# Ag Task Force Research

Interviewed 40+ local, state and other leaders

Continued interest in COG taking the lead convening role for sustained, regional action on behalf of our food and farm economy

Strong recognition of potential value of collaboration across jurisdictions



*COG's Regional Ag Work Group Visit to Potomac Vegetable Farms, Loudoun County location*

# Findings

Formation of a ten-year, Regional Commission could bring together COG members and other leaders to do strategic long-term planning *while also* identifying near term gains for local communities.



*H Street Farms, Washington, D.C. Photo Credit: Niraj Ray, Cultivate the City*

# Vision for Collaboration

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Our goal is a more resilient, connected food and farm economy across urban, suburban and rural communities in the metropolitan Washington region that provides more of the region's food needs: a disruption of current trends. This transformation to create a more certain food future will result in workforce development, economic growth, and environmental, health, and cultural benefits, including as these relate to climate change. An increased number of diverse food and agricultural enterprises will be more visible, supported, and celebrated by residents, leaders, and visitors of all kinds.

# Ag Task Force Work Session

- COG should be convener, unique ability and responsibility
- Coordination and collaboration with regional partners
- FY21 funding strategy needed to support this by November



*A visit to Plow & Stars Farm in Montgomery County. COG's Value Chain Coordinator coordinated a tour with local authors to take planners from around the region to the county's Ag Reserve this month.*

# Next Steps

Seeking CBPC Support to:

- Share Ag Task Force Working Paper with interested COG members and prospective partners
- Develop a funding strategy
- Continue interviews to identify other potential partners



*“Where Do We Go From Here as a Region” Panel at COG’s Local Food and Ag Supply Chain Study Movement Summit in June*



# CBPC Action at September 20th Meeting

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## Resolved to:

- Support CBPC as home for Ag Task Force Work while a Regional Commission can be staffed and established
- Support a November COG Board presentation from the Ag Task Force on establishing and supporting a Regional Commission
- Recommend a presentation on Ag Task Force findings to the COG's Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)