

# Maryland PIRG

## RIGHT TO REPAIR

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senate  
509 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-2003

The Honorable Christopher Van Hollen, Jr.  
United States Senate  
110 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-2002

May 31, 2022

Dear Maryland U.S. Senators,

As businesses, educators, environmental advocates and consumer advocates in Maryland, we are writing to ask your support for pending “Right to Repair” legislation, specifically the Agricultural Right to Repair Act - Senate Bill 3549 and the Fair Repair Act - Senate Bill 3830.

When something breaks, you fix it. That's just common sense. But when only the manufacturer or their “authorized technician” has the necessary parts, tools or information needed, they can charge whatever they want or push you into buying a new device. These manufacturer-imposed repair restrictions affect a wide variety of products from toasters to tablets, and even tractors. The result is surging repair costs and a massive amount of waste. For example, Americans dispose of some [416,000 cell phones](#) every day. Meanwhile, farmers across the country report losing time in the field waiting on “authorized” dealer service.

A Maryland PIRG research finds that repair can save the average household about \$330 per year, which totals [\\$735 million across the state](#), leaving more money in consumers’ pockets. And with stronger repair rights, this money spent on repair will circulate with local repair shops, and reduce reliance on offshore manufacturing thus reducing supply chain pressure.

The Federal Trade Commission studied Right Repair for two years, and studied evidence from both sides. The result? A [unanimous report](#) confirming that repair restrictions hurt consumers and small businesses, and that manufacturers’ arguments against Right to Repair -- such as assertions that repair access undermines safety, privacy, security or intellectual property -- are unfounded, with little or no evidence to support them. This issue has been fully vetted and it's time for action.

**We hope you can co-sponsor the Agricultural Right to Repair Act - Senate Bill 3549** - sponsored by Sen. John Tester (D-MT) and Sen. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM). Farm equipment manufacturers have long monopolized the repair market. Farmers are no longer able to pop the hoods on their tractors to make their own repairs, or even choose where to bring them to get fixed. Instead, farmers are reliant on dealerships, leading to inflated service prices and delays of days or even months. Farmers cannot afford to wait when facing tight planting and harvesting windows. Just as American consumers have the right to buy parts and tools for their cars, or decide where to take them for repairs, farmers should have the same rights to repair the equipment they rely on to feed our nation.

**In addition, we hope you can support the Fair Repair Act - Senate Bill 3830** - sponsored by Sens. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) and Ron Wyden (D-OR). Too often, manufacturers refuse to provide the parts, tools and documentation required to complete repairs of modern devices, including phones, appliances and tractors. The Fair Repair act requires equipment manufacturers to provide access to these necessary materials at a fair and reasonable price for a wide range of devices, excluding medical equipment. The policy is based on the existing, effective agreement between car manufacturers and independent repair shops.

Right to Repair is pro-consumer, pro-farmer, pro-competition, helps small businesses, cuts toxic electronic waste, addresses the digital divide and helps fight climate change. It has been fully reviewed by the FTC and Copyright office, and it's time for Congress to act.

Sincerely,

Emily Scarr, Maryland PIRG  
Corey Gaber, Baltimore Teachers Union  
Jamie DeMarco, Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund  
Humon Heidarian, Fair Farms  
HoCo Climate Action  
Neil Seldman, Institute of Local Self Reliance  
Benjamin Orr, Maryland Center on Economic Policy  
Marceline White, Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition  
Cecilia Plante, Maryland Legislative Coalition  
Samuel Palm, Restore Computer Repair  
Joshua Tulkin, Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter