

**TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE ISIAH LEGGETT ON
ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 16-02, AGRICULTURAL ZONES-TRANSFER
OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS REQUIREMENTS**

February 23, 2016

Good afternoon, I am Jeremy Criss the Agricultural Services Manager and I am here to provide comments on behalf of the County Executive Isiah Leggett regarding Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 16-02, Agricultural Zones-Transfer of Development Rights Requirements.

The County Executive understands the intent of the ZTA exempts existing farm tenant dwellings or detached accessory apartments in the Agricultural Reserve-AR Zone from the calculation of transferable development rights.

The County Executive understands the importance for exempting existing farm tenant dwellings. However, the County Executive cannot support ZTA 16-02 unless it is amended to also include future farm tenant dwellings and detached accessory apartments, which remain accessory to farming and exempts them from the calculation of transferable development rights.

The County Executive is one of the strongest supporters of the Agricultural Reserve including the legislative intent to promote agriculture as the primary land use. It is his belief however that ZTA 16-02 needs work to meet the needs of the agricultural community and fulfill the intent of the AR zone.

It is important that all stakeholders of the Agricultural Reserve recognize that if a property is subdivided this does not mean that farming activities will discontinue.

There are numerous examples of proposed subdivisions in the Agricultural Reserve, including Barnesville Oaks, where both development and farming activities will continue to co-exist.

The Barnesville Oaks property encompasses 840 acres and the subdivision proposed 21 new lots, three out lots, and two farm remainder parcels totaling 780 acres which includes nine existing dwellings.

As proposed the two farm remainder parcels totaling 780 acres, or over 90 percent of total farm acres, would be restricted to agricultural use and not subject to future subdivision.

The Executive staff will be available to further discuss these comments and suggested amendments as part of the work session.

Thank you.