

1/19/24

SUBJECT: Testimony about ZTA 23-09

Dear Council Members:

The County goes to great lengths to support the nationally renowned Ag Reserve - ostensibly for the purpose of Agriculture. Make no mistake- There can be no agritourism without viable, working farms.

This proposal would allow motel-style units on land most anywhere in the Ag Reserve - even on ag easement land we have all paid to preserve for actual agriculture.

This proposal is not agriculture, it is commercial lodging and belongs in that part of the code. Until properly categorized, there can be no productive discussion of this proposal. It needs to be withdrawn and a process convened with stakeholders involved from the start.

I understand that most farmers and groups that support them are against this rushed proposed change because it shortchanges the very people this zone is meant for. I stand with farmers - withdraw this ZTA.

Additionally, our farm land is an insurance to County food security and an essential piece of our survival in the future. We must preserve the Ag reserve for agriculture and for growing our own food.

Please withdraw this ZTA and keep our ag reserve for farming and food production only.

Thank you,

Diana Tato

Montgomery Village, MD