

# Montgomery County Farm Bureau

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January 8, 2024

The Honorable Andrew Friedson, President  
The Honorable Natali Fani-Gonzalez, Chair ECON Committee  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: ZTA 23-09, Farming-Incidental Outdoor Stays

Dear Council President Friedson:

The Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors reviewed ZTA 23-09, Farming- Incidental Outdoor Stays at its December and January meetings. After much discussion, it was unanimously agreed that MCFB cannot support this ZTA.

The Ag Reserve was created in 1980, under some protest from local farmers, to control growth in the county and preserve Montgomery County's agriculture heritage. Over these forty plus years, most farmers and landowners have grown to embrace the concept to preserve the land for use of future generations. Many of these property owners in the reserve have sacrificed financial gain to preserve this land to its intended use. Many acres are encumbered by various easements, local and state.

- Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP)
- Montgomery County Transfer of Development Rights Program (TDR)
- Building Lot Termination Program (BLT)
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)
- Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)
- Montgomery County Rural Legacy Program (RLP)
- Legacy Open Space Program (LOS)

It could be argued that the high impact fees levied on building permits is another deterrent.

The common theme throughout these forty plus years, through many administrations, regardless of the changes in county leadership, has been to keep rooftops out of the Ag Reserve zone.

It is our opinion that this ZTA could reverse this forty year success story. This ZTA could introduce large numbers of people to an area purposely without the infrastructure to facilitate them.

Montgomery County Farm Bureau believes that this ZTA is so contrary to the intent of this tremendous private and public effort at preservation, that it could damage the public trust in any past and future preservation agreements.

For those reasons and many others, Montgomery County Farm Bureau officially wishes to be on the record in opposition to this ZTA 23-09. MCFB joins with Montgomery Agricultural Producers, Montgomery Countryside Alliance, and Sugarloaf Citizens association in this opposition.

Sincerely,

Todd Greenstone

Todd Greenstone President MCFB

Doug Lechlida

Doug Lechlida 1<sup>st</sup> VP MCFB

Cc: Mark Elrich, County Executive

Mike Scheffel, Director, Office of Agriculture