

24 January 2024

TO: Montgomery County Council
FROM: Laura Mol —
RE: ZTA 23-09 postponement

I write to ask you not to postpone but, rather, to withdraw the proposed Zoning Text Amendment 23-09, because it fails to serve the fundamental purpose of the Agricultural Reserve itself. The concept of the Ag Reserve is the wisdom of the long view—the very long view.

I appreciate the commitment of Councilmembers to the economic vitality of Montgomery County—particularly those who see ZTA 23-09 as a desirable component of agritourism, but I disagree: expansion of commercial development on Ag Reserve land does not serve the long view. One doesn't have to be a farmer to know our fundamental need for healthy, working soil—used for growing food—and not for construction of motels.

In our immediate present, rife with expanding ecological degradations, what can be more valuable to the future health and vitality of Montgomery County than the Agricultural Reserve's preservation of land itself, wooded as well as agricultural—? Unpaved and unbuilt-upon land, stewarded by good farming and by undeveloped conservation, are invaluable to healthy air and water, which are invaluable to all of us who live here, present and future.

The Ag Reserve appears to be so large of part of the County, so opportune for “small” or “limited” uses contrary to its fundamental purposes, so vulnerable to this amendment and that. Please hold to the long view and decline the incursion of ZTA 23-09.