

My name is Robert Jamison. I am a farmer in Montgomery County and I live in Poolesville Maryland. I support Bill 23-09 and I encourage the Council to approve it as proposed. We need this kind of overnight stay in the agricultural reserve; we have needed this for decades.

There are many advantages to allowing this kind of overnight stay. This bill, if passed, will allow people of all ages who are interested in agriculture the opportunity to study farming on site for days at a time. The next “Madame Curies” of agriculture are potentially amongst our youth but need the opportunity to freely pursue their interests in agriculture and this bill’s passage could allow them those opportunities. Having overnight lodging on-site in the AR will enhance the ability for soil conservationists, other conservationists, agronomists, pathologists, biologists, visiting equestrians, educators on sabbatical, University college, Master and PHD students of agronomy and agricultural and veterinary medicine to stay on-site. How many non-farmers in this room have ever stayed up all night foaling a mare or delivering a calf? How many have had the privilege of seeing a sunrise on a beautiful farm in the AR? I would like to see those numbers increased.

I have a deep passion and love for the upcounty having been reared on a farm in Poolesville and working in farming since I was a young child. From a posterity standpoint, I have five children and ten grandchildren all living in the AR Zone and all engaged in the pursuit of or enjoyment of agriculture. My crop insurance adjuster certified 747 acres of wheat that I sowed this fall and which is currently growing and which potentially will be harvested in July. Our country needs the wheat I grow for bread, pasta, cakes and crackers to feed my fellow citizens. I have sent you by way of email some pictures and several succinct videos which illustrate some of my agricultural operations to give you a glimpse of my work to help feed the world. I am proud to be part of our county’s agricultural community. I was recently elected to the USDA Farm Service Agency Board by my constituents, the farmers, landowners and ranchers of both Montgomery County and Howard County Maryland. In this position, I work with several others to manage a large local USDA budget among other things. I am charged with representing my constituents and I work to get them federal funds to promote and support agriculture.

Montgomery County farmers have been on the cutting edge of agricultural protocols and technology and are recognized internationally for their prowess in agriculture. For example the late Montgomery County resident and extension agent Bob Raver helped develop no-till farming. The late Douglas King had the best Holstein cattle arguably on the entire planet. The late David Weitzer with whom I toured farms in Africa and Brazil was a world renowned agriculturist and milk producer. Right now, at the Maryland Agricultural History Farm Park in Derwood, we have some of the best of the best soil conservationists in the nation. At M-NCPPC, we have highly educated staff who help the farmers with their soil conservation endeavors. The very capable personnel at the County’s Department of Permitting Services Well and Septic Division have routinely worked with farmers to keep good clean water available and protected. You can be and should be proud of Montgomery County’s agriculture and the many hard working farmers and government staff that support farming. This bill will give many more people the opportunity to be part of it, either by working to better enhance our many and varied agricultural operations, or by simply enjoying the beauty of the grain farms, cattle farms, vineyards, and equestrian facilities.

The passage of this bill is long overdue.