

1/19/2024

My mother grew up on a farm in Calvert County. When her father died all the heirs transferred their ownership to the oldest brother who WANTED to continue farming. He loved farming so much he placed the entire farm into the MD agricultural easement program as soon as it was available to prevent it from ever being turned into housing tracts and shopping centers. That farm is still being farmed but is surrounded by development.

I stand with the agricultural groups, community associations, and other stakeholders who have stated clearly and firmly opposition to ZTA 23-09.

There are challenges to farming in Montgomery County but this ZTA seeking to change the definition of farming is not helpful to current and future farmers. The number one issue for farmers is access to land - the cost of land is a hinderance to getting the diverse next generation of farmers growing.

Land uses that would compete for farmland in the only area of the county set aside for farming must be very carefully considered with stakeholder input from the beginning. If you want to help farmers - ask what they need and then listen.

Meanwhile, agriculture is talking to you. They are telling you this ZTA will hinder not help. I've read about one farm, in existence for only six years, that has already moved to Howard County because they can't afford to stay in Montgomery County. Please work to withdraw this ZTA.

Respectfully,

Sandra Nicht

