

January 25, 2024

Dear President Friedson and all County Council members,

I am writing in opposition to Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 23-09. I feel that if the Amendment is approved, it will permanently weaken and compromise the purpose, integrity, and values of the Agricultural Reserve (AR) which is the one part of the County that was expressly set aside for agriculture.

The proposal to add "incidental outdoor stays" to the list of accessory uses for farming as well as the elimination of size restrictions for their use, conflicts with the fundamental purposes of the Agricultural Reserve which is to preserve working farms, open space, and our water resources. This proposal is not consistent with the purpose of the AR. Commercial lodging and overnight facilities are not at all related to farming and agricultural production and they represent a major long-term threat to the integrity and survival of the Agricultural Reserve. This would certainly be the case if the size restrictions for "incidental outdoor stays" are eliminated from the proposed Amendment.

Having grown up and lived in Kensington and more recently in Bethesda for my 74 years, I am thankful and proud of the vision and foresight that our previous County Councils have taken through the years, to establish, defend and protect our Agricultural Reserve. Our AR has been and continues to be used as a model by other states to preserve farmland and protect farmers.

As our County continues to grow, pressures to undermine and compromise the intent and guiding principles for which the Agricultural Reserve was established will continue to increase. I am deeply concerned that the proposed Zoning Amendment ZTA 23-09, if approved, will result in significant and permanent long-term damaging impacts to our vulnerable and irreplaceable Agricultural Reserve.

I stand with the agricultural groups, community associations, and other stakeholders who have clearly stated and opposed ZTA-23-09. I hope that the County Council will vote to protect and defend the guiding principles and intent of the Agricultural Reserve and withdraw Amendment ZTA 23-09.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

*William Yeaman*

William Yeaman

