



AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 26, 2023

Evan Glass, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Glass: Amendments to Farm Alcohol Production ZTA 18-03 and ZTA 18-14

The Agricultural Advisory Committee has been monitoring the progress of farm alcohol production-FAP applications in accordance with ZTA 18-03 and ZTA 18-14. The Office of Agriculture-OAG has remitted two reports to the County Council on the status of farm alcohol production and these reports included suggestions on how to improve the process for reviewing and approving FAP applications.

[2020 OAG FAP Report](#)

[2023 OAG FAP Report](#)

There are several FAP applications in the queue and the OAG does not believe approving them is in the best interest of the County and the intent of the FAP ZTA 18-03 and ZTA 18-14.

Outlined below is a summary of the OAG recommendations that the Agricultural Advisory Committee supports and the AAC recommends the County Government (Executive and County Council) should revisit the FAP policies.

The minimum lot size for all types of FAP should be amended to require 25-acres.

Farm breweries and farm distilleries currently require a 25-acre minimum lot size.

There is no minimum lot size for farm wineries and farm cideries.

The minimum on-site production requirements for farm breweries and farm distilleries should be amended to require five (5) acres.

Farm wineries and farm cideries require 5-acre minimum on-site production or on adjacent abutting property.

Farm breweries and farm distilleries currently require only one acre of on-site production.



The OAG encourages that FAP owners provide evidence of contract growing of specialty crops.

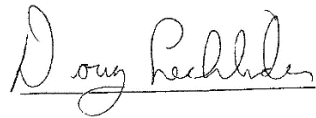
The recommendations above will help to create a level playing field that treats all FAP the same in terms of minimum lot size and on-site production.

The primary use of land in the AR is agriculture. FAP in the AR must be proven as a use accessory to farming as many currently are. As with any business in the AR, we must carefully assess if this is an accessory use to farming or simply a commercial endeavor to market alcohol with no production ties to the farm.

If the FAP business cannot be shown as accessory to agriculture, it does not fit the intent of ZTA 18-03 and ZTA 18-14, and therefore, should not be approved. *Please note that when the above ZTAs were approved, there were several FAP businesses already in place that were designated as non-conforming uses-Brookeville Beer Farm, Elder Pine Brewing and Blending, Waredaca Farm Brewery, Doc Waters Cidery, Two Chimneys Cider, Sugarloaf Mountain Winery and Rocklands Winery.*

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug Lechliden". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Doug Lechliden, Chairman

Cc: Marc Elrich, County Executive