



## **AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD**

February 16, 2020

The Honorable Tom Hucker, President  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20856

Re: Subdivision Regulation Amendment No.: 21-01 Concerning: Exemptions – Alcohol Production

Dear Council President Hucker,

The Montgomery County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board supports SRA 21-01 as introduced on January 26, 2021. The proposed amendment to Chapter 50 of the County Code will greatly reduce one of the largest barriers of entry into the Farm Alcohol Production market in the county. One of County Executive Elrich's priority outcomes is a Growing Economy. SRA 21-01, if enacted, will help achieve a more robust agricultural economy in the county.

As the Office of Agriculture's report "The Status of Farm Alcohol Production in Montgomery County" illustrates, agritourism uses are a viable local economic engine. In the two years since ZTAs 18-03 and 18-14 were passed, 4 new Farm Alcohol Production businesses have joined the 6 already existing in the county, resulting in a total of more than 200 full/part time jobs and \$4,529,298 in gross sales. These numbers are exciting and show that the demand for these types of businesses exists. However, Farm Alcohol Production is just one accessory agricultural use that would benefit from SRA 21-01. Others include on-farm markets and other agritourism activities. The Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board has met with easement holders who are interested in opening up new accessory agricultural businesses on their farms. If passed, SRA 21-01 will enable these businesses to open faster, more efficiently, and join the growing economic contribution from agribusinesses in the county.

The Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board respectfully asks for a favorable vote on SRA 21-01.

Sincerely,

Michael Jamison, Chairman

cc: Jeremy Criss, Director, Office of Agriculture