

Montgomery County Farm Bureau

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November 26, 2021

The Honorable Tom Hucker, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Hucker:

Re: ZTA 21-08 Landscape Contractor Use Standards

Montgomery County Farm Bureau (MCFB) appreciates the opportunity to comment on ZTA 21-08.

Clearly, we appreciate our Landscape Contractors and their need for a spot to conduct business. The question becomes one of where to locate the business so that it is economically feasible and within appropriate zones.

MCFB members reside primarily in the AR (Agricultural Reserve) and rural residential zones. It makes sense for these businesses to locate where adequate space exists, and their activities are not intrusive to neighbors. While we aren't familiar with all eight zones and their limitations, we suggest that landscapers be permitted to operate in any zone that doesn't devour acreages that are currently used for food products.

Our MCFB members are most concerned about losing acreage in the AR. The infrastructure for farmers to obtain equipment, fertilizers, seeds, chemicals, repair services, and other essential supplies is shrinking throughout the region. Many of us already must cross state lines from Maryland to Pennsylvania to get essential services for our tractors and farm equipment.

If the number of acres available to farmers to produce locally grown grains, vegetables, fruits, and berries is "used up" on other projects like solar panels, wind mills, housing, shopping centers, and etcetera, farms will disappear, the infrastructure that supports farmers will disappear, and we will become another metropolitan complex like Fairfax County, VA. Who wants that? Food production in Montgomery County will be best for us all.

We trust that decisions will be made to allow landscape contractors to locate appropriately into zones that don't whittle away at good farming soils that can be used to feed us wholesome, fresh foods.

Sincerely,

Lonnie W. Luther, President

Montgomery County Farm Bureau

Cc: County Council and Staff

Marc Elrich, County Executive

Jeremy Criss, Director of Agriculture

Robert Butz, Chairman, Montgomery Soil Conservation District

Doug Lechliden, Ag Advisory Committee

Bob Cissel, Director, Montgomery Agricultural Producers

Montgomery County Farm Bureau, Board of Directors