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July 22, 2025

The Honorable Kathleen Stewart, President  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD. 20850

Subject: Written Testimony on Zoning Text Amendment 25-10, Landscaping Requirements-  
Native Plants

Dear Council President Stewart:

Jamison Ag and Turf is a family-owned farm that operates its business in upper Montgomery County of the Agriculture Reserve. We specialize in growing corn, soybeans and wheat for commodity crops. We also grow Maryland State Certified turf grass sod since 1999, that services the building and landscape industry in Montgomery County and the greater Mid-Atlantic region. We care for and maintain 500 acres of tall type fescue sod. Primarily our sod is a blend of 90 percent turf type tall fescue and 10 percent bluegrass from Maryland's list of approved cultivars. Our grass blends grow green and are easy to maintain in this mid-Atlantic region known as the, transition zone. Since our summers are too hot and humid for most cool season grasses such as 100 % bluegrass blends, and winters are too cold for warm season grasses, turf type tall fescue is well adapted to this zone of the United States to assist the building industry in ensuring effective sediment control for projects. Tall type fescue blended with bluegrass is the primary sod of choice for most construction projects in this county and state. In order to qualify for the voluntary Maryland State Sod Certified Program, we must keep our seeding blends at the recommendations of the state. Fescue is a required grass.

The fescue we grow, is a non-native species derived from Europe and other areas in that world region. ZTA 25-10 would severely stifle the demand for the product that we grow in this county. Our business model would suffer extreme financial setbacks having to reduce the amount of acreage we rely on to operate our business. In addition, alternative grasses that are native do not compare in product to tall fescue regarding vitality of the plant. As mentioned above, Montgomery County is located in the "Transition Zone." We have hot summers and cold winters. Fescue is a resilient, non-invasive and disease resistant grass best suited for this region. That is a main reason why it is used a specification on many MDOT state highway sod projects. Research from University of Maryland has shown fescue to be a well suited species of grass for this region.

In conclusion, Jamison Ag and Turf is against ZTA 25-10. We ask that we are brought into discussion to ensure future landscape plans do not eliminate or reduce the need for the product that we have been growing in this county for 25 years.

Sincerely,

Michael Jamison

Co-owner Jamison Ag and Turf,