

From: [Criss, Jeremy](#)
To: [Margaret Chasson](#)
Cc: [Arnold, Jacqueline](#); [Scheffel, Mike](#); [Fisher, Kristin](#); [Charles Schuster](#)
Subject: RE: phone service
Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 9:15:00 AM
Attachments: [FY22 Budget.msg](#)

Hello Margaret,

I am following up on your message below.

My office phone number is **301 590-2830** and if you leave a message I also receive an email with the phone number that I will respond to.

My cell phone is **301 943-9766** and you can call me anytime.

I am responding to your question "What I wanted to call about was your budget. Are you happy with the proposed funding for the Office of Agriculture?"

Initial response-The Office of Agriculture does not have sufficient resources to address the growing needs of our farmers including the production of local food in the County.

The OAG has new responsibilities associated with review and approvals of Farm Alcohol Production Facilities, Agritourism Venues and now Solar Fields governed by ZTA 20-01.

The administration did not allocate additional resources to the OAG in light of these additional responsibilities and this will become problematic moving forward.

Background

The Office of Agriculture was instructed to achieve the Round I and Round II (one-time) savings plan for FY21.

This meant that our FY 22 appropriation was not changed from the FY 21 because the savings plan was only one time.

The OAG was then instructed to submit an FY22 Budget as a maintenance budget with no new programs or enhancements from the FY21 appropriation.

This instruction helps to illustrate the administrations view of agriculture including the various financial resources necessary to support the agricultural community and local food economy.

Keep in mind that our FY22 Budget Submission was due last November and many things have changed on the national and local levels.

Examples-Growing Food Insecurity from the Pandemic, Expansion of the Farm to Food Bank Program, Increased Demand for OAG programs and services to expand local food production, etc.

The biggest challenge for us in the Office of Agriculture is the limited amount of 3 staff and Operating Expenses totaling \$319 K annually that we use to support the agricultural community and local food economy.

Given the small staff of 3, the OAG has achieved a high level of performance in carrying out its mission. Limited staffing is restricting the County from seeing the full potential of the agricultural reserve.

The only way to achieve this is by increasing the staff by 2 as referenced in the Farm Alcohol Production Report.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thanks J

Please take a moment to answer this quick satisfaction survey about our interaction today:

<https://forms.gle/yXhnxpQLtHgFPtBX6>

Jeremy V. Criss
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CONNECT WITH The Office of Agriculture



Montgomery County Ag Reserve
93,000 acres

From: Margaret Chasson <mchasson@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 30, 2021 4:33 PM
To: Criss, Jeremy <Jeremy.Criss@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: phone service

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Jeremy - I have tried to call you on both my land line and via cell phone at 240-590-2830. What happens is the phone rings once and a voice comes on saying "to continue your call, press 1". When you press 1, someone comes on with questions about are you over 50 and if so press 1 and then a pitch about a medical service device.

Are other callers having this problem?

Have you been getting calls today?

What I wanted to call about was your budget. Are you happy with the proposed funding for the Office of Agriculture?

Margaret