

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 24, 2023

Marc Elrich Montgomery County Executive 101 Monroe Street Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Elrich: Process to Replace Jeremy Criss who will be

retiring on October 1, 2023

The Agricultural Advisory Committee is charged with providing input and recommendations on issues impacting rural and agricultural areas in Montgomery County. With Jeremy Criss retiring on October 1, 2023, there are few current issues more important to the future stability and success of agriculture in Montgomery County, and therefore before this Committee, than his replacement. There will be ample opportunities to expound on Jeremy's important legacy; this letter focuses on ensuring that that legacy is allowed to continue.

Jeremy's replacement must be a seasoned professional who has the skills, experience, and independence to represent the 550+ farmers in Montgomery County who contribute close to \$300 million to the County's economy. He or she must be diligent in protecting and preserving over 90,000 acres in Montgomery County's forward thinking Agricultural Reserve. He or she must understand and represent all aspects of agriculture – from commodity farmers to equine activities. He or she can be beholden to no one, relying on professional knowledge to steadfastly advise on what is best for agriculture. Equally importantly, the person selected must understand the history of agricultural development and regulation in the County. Anything less would be a disservice to the citizens, and particularly the farmers, in Montgomery County.

To this end, the Agricultural Advisory Committee, in our role representing our various constituencies, strongly requests that the new Director of the Office of Agriculture:

- remain a merit-based position,
- be hired only after appropriate input on candidates from the constituencies that he or she will represent and that a representative or representatives from the Ag Advisory Committee have a seat at that table,
- have adequate time after being hired to spend with Jeremy Criss to benefit from his extensive knowledge, and
- enter into this position with the serious intention of, like Jeremy, representing the farmers in Montgomery County for many years to come.



We would welcome an opportunity to discuss the job description as well as the search plans with you at any time.

Sincerely,

Doug Lechlider, Chairman

Doug Rechlider

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