

(Attachment 6.)



BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND



March 30, 2011

The Honorable Joan Carter Conway
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Miller Senate Building, 2 West
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 209: *Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation
Easements - Allowable Residential Development*

Dear Chair Conway:

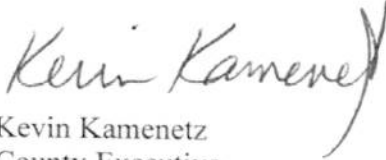
Both Baltimore County and Montgomery County have nationally acclaimed comprehensive agricultural land preservation programs. Our success comes from having made difficult choices to both implement protective agricultural zoning and to provide public funds for easement acquisitions. Both of these components are essential to creating conditions that are suitable for promoting a viable agricultural industry in the State.

When a farm family considers agricultural land preservation, one of the important equity considerations can be to retain the right for a lot for a child. The current Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation Program provides for this important option – HB 209 eliminates this option. Easements and zoning can protect the land, but it is critically important that we continue to provide opportunities to promote the next generation of farmers.

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation has suggested that the concerns of our counties can be met by subdividing acreage prior to putting the land under easement. There are numerous problems with this suggestion such as the need for detailed engineering at considerable landowner time and expense and potential conflicts with State laws such as forest conservation. The most significant issue for our counties is that because of the restrictive zoning in our counties, landowners cannot take out lots up front and retain enough density to participate in the State program.

We ask that you vote against HB 209 and retain the existing law that complements the successful preservation programs our counties have demonstrated.

Thank you for your consideration.


Kevin Kamenetz
County Executive
Baltimore County


Isiah Leggett
County Executive
Montgomery County