

Carol DeSoto

From: Brianna Bowling <brianna@zekiah.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 11:26 AM
To: Carol DeSoto
Subject: ZTA #24-182 written testimony

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My name is Brianna Bowling from Newburg, MD. I am a supporter of agriculture and a member of the Charles County Farm Bureau. While this ZTA does not directly affect my farm, it does affect the current and more importantly, the *future* farming community as well as every constituent of Charles County who enjoys open space and agritourism. I do NOT support this ZTA.

The requirement for a paved apron has a high probability of being both prohibitively expensive and time consuming. It will likely prevent agritourism projects from beginning and certainly deter them unless they are very large operations that could afford the cost and traffic studies required. Our entire county population and the farming community both benefit from having agritourism – especially smaller and seasonal events.

The farming community wants the ability to share their farm and diversify their income stream so they can remain farming. Without diversification, many farms are not financially viable and are in danger of being sold, losing the open space and direct to consumer food source.

Secondly, I humbly ask that, if this ZTA has the goal of supporting farming, as the Planning Department has stated, then work with the farming stakeholders, including the Charles County Farm Bureau, to create a ZTA that achieves that goal. Frankly, if they truly wanted to support farming as they stated, why did they not solicit the input of the farming community? Not one member of the Farm Bureau, the Planning & Growth Rural Task Force, or any farmer that I have discussed this with, was consulted or informed of the ZTA until it was published on the website as being presented to the Planning Commission. Policies work best with the input of the people they serve and represent.

Please do **not** approve this amendment and instead ask the Planning Department to work with their community constituents to create a different pathway that meets the needs of both the Planning Department and the farming community.

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