

William L Rice Sr.  
Rice Farms LLC  
15605 Stella Maris Drive  
Newburg Maryland 20664

Re: ZTA #24-182

As a constituent and supporter of local agriculture, and member of the Charles County Farm Bureau, I am respectfully asking you to OPPOSE ZTA #24-182 regarding agritourism. If this amendment were to pass, it could have unintended consequences for the broader agricultural community of Charles County.

Farming is not without its challenges, and us farmers in Charles County were ENCOURAGED to diversify our operations after the Tobacco Buyout. Many of us have turned to a variety of products and production chains; vegetable and fruit production, grain marketing, greenhouse and nursery, cattle sales, and welcoming the public on our farms to purchase our products and enjoy the beauty we have worked so hard for. I fear that if this amendment passes, our family's farm and business may be subjected to extremely expensive unnecessary costs to change the way the public visits our farm.

I believe that this amendment does not account for the seasonality of our operation and could restrict our business for both present and future opportunities by requiring paved parking lots and expanding entrances when there is a potential for more traffic. As a matter of fact, this requirement ADDS impervious surfaces to our County, which is considered more harmful to the environment.

I humbly ask that the Commissioners do not approve this amendment, and work with the Planning Commission to find a pathway that both keeps our residents safe and affords us the ability to grow our business gradually. The agricultural community requests to be part of this discussion.