

Donna Golden
11660 Edge Hill Rd
Newburg MD 20664

Good evening, Commissioners Mr. Collins, Mr. Rucci, Mr. Bowling, Ms. Coates, and Ms. Stewart,

In 2015 my family purchased a small farm on Popes Creek Road not with the intention of getting rich off of the purchase but to preserve the open area and the landscape surrounding where we reside and our neighbors. Saving the land from the next housing development. This property may not be mighty in acreage, but it does produce grain that supports food production that we all benefit from. As a property owner that will be affected the amended Tier changes, I'm in favor of the changes to protect not only my farm but the surrounding areas preserving the future of farming and forest lands.

There are many concerns for not conserving these areas that affect the residents in the Newburg area. The concern of sewage runoffs in our local waterways of the Potomac River as we have seen from the Clifton Development. Roadways currently cannot handle the influx of traffic from Virginia commuters and allowing for additional development would increase burden on residents. The area schools are crowded with the current population adding additional residential housing would have a negative impact with no future plans of adding additional schools south of La Plata. Lastly, there is a concern of increased crime that is prominent in highly populated areas and the counties lack of resources to patrol and maintain a safe environment for Newburg residents.

I'm surprised that the areas in the amendment were not already listed in Tier 4 due to the Maryland Land Use Code that states areas "dominated by agricultural lands, forest lands, or other natural areas" or "priority conservation areas, or areas subject to covenants, restrictions, conditions, or conservation easements.... for the purpose of conserving natural resources or agricultural land' should be designated as Tier 4. The subject areas are predominately used for agricultural producing soybeans, wheat, corn, hay, and other crops and is designated as an Agricultural Conservation District. Nearly all the adjacent areas are already designated as Tier 4. How did the designation skip the remaining Agricultural Conservation District properties?

Preserving Charles County farmland also preserves the buy local concept. As we have seen with the pandemic, Charles County citizens relied heavily on locally grown produce and meat products. Providing resources to citizens experiencing struggles with grocery store chains not able to keep shelves stocked. Buy local has taken on a new perspective in providing quality products to citizens of Charles County through local markets, store front locations or at the family farm.

Board of Commissioners, I ask that you take into consideration the importance of preserving Charles County farms and the citizens who reside in these areas that enjoy open areas and the landscaped untouched by over development, excessive traffic patterns and crime. Agriculture is an important occupation that supports the food source we all heavily rely on.

Thank you for your time.