

August 27, 2000
Re: IO-135

You inquired whether there are any ethical issues raised by your participation in the state or county agricultural land preservation program. As a citizen and property owner in Anne Arundel County, you have the same rights, duties, and privileges of other citizens and property owners. The Public Ethics Law is designed to insure that you do not use the prestige of your public position for your own benefit, or otherwise participate in an official capacity, in any matters in which you have an interest. In your position as legislative assistant to a county council member, you have no role in the selection or approval process for agricultural easements. As long as your participation in the process is strictly personal, as a landowner, there are no ethical issues of concern to you. Ethical issues would only arise if you had some authority to participate, or some influence to use in the process. Absent those factors, you are merely exercising your rights as a property owner and you are subject to the same criteria as other similarly situated applicants for an agricultural easement.

Thank you for your inquiry. If you have other questions, please call any time.

Sincerely,

Betsy K. Dawson
Executive Director