

Legislative Testimony Nov 2 2020 (Public)

Full Name	Home Address	City	Zip Code	Representing yourself?	What or whom do you represent?	Legislation	Position	Remarks	Attachment
Brian Riddle	2417 Fox Creek Lane	Davidsonville	21035	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Support		
Rita Calvert	1518 Circle Dr	Annapolis	21409	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Support	Our small farms need thls support to stay in business.	
Lynne Forsman	2405 Fox Creek Lane, Davidsonville	Davidsonville	21035	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Support		
Joan Bonzon	4880 Anchors Way	Galesville	20765	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Support		
Anna M Chaney	5801 Brooks Woods Road	Lothian	20711	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Support	I support this bill as amended as of today 11/1/2020. It is vital to keeping farms in farming as this bill regulates and allows for a limited number of special events on farms. It is vital to current farmers to aid them in sustainability and also to future generations to know that they have options to support their full time farming and agricultural careers. Without government subsidies, it's very difficult to profit from farming especially on the smaller farms they are left in our county. (Under 500 acres). This bill allows for farmers to be self sustainable during times that governments are stretched thin for funding. I thank you for your support and very much appreciated your care of the county and support of the farms. Sincerely, Anna Chaney	
Julia Howes	4951 Chestnut St	Shady Side	20764	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Support	Give agritourism a chance in Anna Arundel County. By allowing this bill to pass, we are opening so many new doors not only for our farmers but for our county & community as a whole. Education needs to include agriculture and this is a great first step in getting more people involved and aware of what happens on a farm and the various methods of farming. Please support this bill!	
Kathy Gramp	404 Arundel Rd	Tracys Landing	20779	No	Advocates for Herring Bay	Bill 69-20:	Oppose	On October 19, 2020, the Advocates for Herring Bay provided the attached information and recommendations on Bill 69-20 to the members of the County Council by email. We request that this statement be included in the legislative history of this legislation.	YES
Paul Christensen	231 Hidden Valley Road	Tracys Landing	20779	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Oppose	Bill 69-20 is promoted as a way to provide new revenue opportunities to farmers in the declining agriculture industry. County maps from OPZ show that 991 properties would benefit from the bill, but the USDA 2017 Agricultural Census shows that Anne Arundel County had only 390 farms that sold more than \$1000 of ag products. It is therefore likely that the majority of properties addressed by the bill are not used for farming and many opportunities for unintended consequences exist. The bill will also allow as many as eight events per year with as many as 25 attendees acre to be held each year. OPZ maps also show that there 110 properties larger than 100 acres in the county, so that events with 2500 attendees are allowed. This bill is much more likely to create nuisances for neighbors than help preserve our agricultural heritage. Please vote against this bill.	
Maura Dalsey	1915 Tuckahoe Ct	Odenton	21113	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Support	Council members, please consider my remarks in support of Bills 68-20 and 69-20. Agritourism is vital and necessary to preserving agriculture, permaculture and saving our farms in Maryland. Being a neighbor to the capital where city life reigns supreme, I have seen firsthand how farms and "farm life" have become increasingly more coveted for retreats, events, educational opportunities and more. By passing Bills 68-20 and 69-20, farm owners will have access to guidelines and procedures on how to properly and effectively host safe events to meet these demands. In addition to the community demand of experiencing agricultural life, it is imperative that we save our farms. In order to partake in Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation's goal of preserving 1,030,000 acres of agricultural land, including farmland, wooded areas, and open space, we must ensure a way to protect our farms in our own backyards. By supporting these bills, you will give farmers the ability to bring in a sustainable revenue to keep their farms alive and preserve this farmland. With the approval of agricultural special events, there will be a need of employees to work such events, thus, creating more job opportunities in a time when they are needed most. Please consider my position and your responsibility to your farms, friends and community when reviewing Bills 68-20 and 69-20. Thank you for your consideration.	
Jessica Beckerman	806 shady oaks road	West River	20778	Yes		Bill 69-20:	Support		
Laurie Bond	1053 Shore Acres Rd	Arnold	21012	Yes		Bill 87-20:	Support	November 1, 2020 To Whom It May Concern: This letter is to show my support of 87-20: Public Safety & Zoning. I support adding the word "training" to the code. Training animals provides a public service. In my experience as a pet owner, having well trained doges has added to my enjoyment of the dog-friendly aspects Anne Arundel county has to offer. Sincerely yours, Laurie Bond	



Statement of Stephen Marley
On behalf of the Advocates for Herring Bay¹
Regarding Bill 69-20, Zoning-Farm or Agritourism Heritage Site Stays or Special Events
October 19, 2020

The Advocates for Herring Bay strongly support initiatives that provide economic opportunity in the rural parts of County while ensuring adequate protections for the environment. As noted in our October 1, 2020 letter to the Council, we are concerned that enacting Bill 69-20 in its current form could have unintended adverse impacts on the environment.² Today, we want to call your attention to what is, in our opinion, the bill's weak oversight of Special Events that will leave the program vulnerable to potential abuse by bad actors.

First, although Planning and Zoning officers would be required to determine whether an event may have a localized adverse impact, there are no enforceable performance standards for public health and environmental impacts to consider in making that determination. In addition, many of these events will occur on weekends, which will make it difficult to effectively police any except the most egregious failures to abide by the terms of the permit.

However, our most significant concern is inadequate legal protection for farmers and consumers. As currently written, there are no licensing requirements for Special Events. Without a licensing framework, it is unclear who will be liable for complying with the conditions for events—is it the farmers who lease out their land for events or is it the operator of the event? This lack of accountability leaves not only the consumer and the farmer exposed, but also denies the County a legal mechanism for assuring the health, safety, and quality of agritourism events.

We urge the Council to amend Bill 69-20 to put in place the performance standards and licensing controls necessary to ensure a vibrant and high-quality agritourism industry for which its residents can be proud.

¹ The Advocates for Herring Bay, Inc. is a community-based environmental group in southern Anne Arundel County.

² That letter outlines concerns about the absence of limits on forest loss and impervious surfaces, the risk of potential degradation of streams and wetlands, and the need to address wastewater management issues in Tier 4 areas served by septic systems. See <http://herringbay.org/pdfs/AHB-Bill-69-20-October-1-2020.pdf>