



Howard County

Agricultural Land Preservation Program

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Testimony for the Strader Property Installment Purchase Agreement

To: Lonnie Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Administration

Through: *W* Valdis Lazdins, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

Through: Beth Burgess, Chief, Resource Conservation Division, Department of Planning and Zoning *BB*

From: Joy Levy, Agricultural Land Preservation Program Administrator, Department of Planning and Zoning *GL*

Date: September 24, 2015

The Department of Planning and Zoning, of which the Agricultural Land Preservation Program is a part, supports Council Bill No. -2015. This bill approves an Installment Purchase Agreement to acquire an agricultural preservation easement on property owned by Madeline and Donald Strader and Patricia Reed Strader. Section 15.507(g)(4) of the Howard County Code requires County Council approval of a multi-year Installment Purchase Agreement pursuant to Section 612 of the Howard County Charter.

The approval of an Installment Purchase Agreement for the Strader property would preserve 58.7 acres of productive farmland in the County, adding to the over 22,100 acres that have been preserved to date. The easement will cost \$1,676,500 to acquire. The funding comes from the portion of the transfer tax dedicated to the agricultural land preservation program. When the twice yearly interest payments that the IPA provides are factored in, the overall cost of the Strader easement will be \$2,011,327. This farm is desirable due to the high concentration of preserved land nearby, and the high percentage of the farm that is tillable and is currently being farmed. The Soil Conservation District reports that the Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan is up to date and fully implemented.

Having met all eligibility criteria for the acquisition of an agricultural preservation easement, staff supports Council Bill No. -2015 and hopes that the County Council moves to approve it. Thank you for your consideration.

cc: Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator, Department of Administration
Stanley Milesky, Director, Department of Finance
Lisa O'Brien, Senior Assistant County Solicitor, Office of Law
Ag Read File
Strader File