



MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Howard County Bird Club A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society



March 20, 2017

Howard County Council
3400 Courthouse Dr.
Ellicott City, MD 21043
councilmail@howardcountymd.gov

Dear Council Members Weinstein, Ball, Terrasa, Sigaty, and Fox:

The Maryland Ornithological Society and its Howard County chapter, the Howard County Bird Club, support CB-23-2017. This bill will restore equity to property devalued under the current County Tier Map. This is just the creative solution we called for when opposing CB-16-2017. The argument at the time for opening 1615 acres to development was that Tier IV designation disqualified farms from preservation programs because Tier IV eliminated the possibility of subdivision. CB-23 takes into account the subdivision potential of a farm based on its underlying zoning, not its tier classification, solely for the purpose of eligibility for agricultural preservation. We might also suggest that the bill be expanded to allow the underlying zoning to determine the landowner's Density Exchange Option as well.

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) is a statewide nonprofit organization established in 1945 and devoted to the study and conservation of birds. Currently we have 15 county-based chapters and 1,600 members. The Howard County Bird Club (HCBC) was established in 1975, and has over 200 members. We will detail other concerns with the Amendment below.

We believe that CB-23 will keep farmland as farmland, rather than housing developments. We encourage the preservation of farmland, which in turn preserves irreplaceable wildlife habitat, green open space, and water quality, not to mention the iconic rural landscape as depicted on our County Seal. Please support and pass CB.23.

Sincerely,

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