

Will Howard County Leadership Keep Our Children Safe?

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"A tractor-trailer was traveling north on Route 15 when a Buckingham County school bus, with its yellow flashing lights activated, approached from the opposite direction to pick up a group of children, the statement said. As the bus slowed, two children ran across the road toward it. The driver of the tractor-trailer braked, but the vehicle, loaded with 75,000 pounds of mulch and traveling downhill, hit the children before it could stop. The children, identified as Tori Perez, 5, and Jaiden Bartee, 6, died at the scene." (https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/two-va-children-struck-and-killed-by-tractor-trailer-as-they-approached-school-bus/2017/03/30/ca46f01e-1555-11e7-9e4f-09aa75d3ec57_story.html?utm_term=.b8eae4b94816)

Our hearts and prayers go out to all the families involved in this tragic accident that occurred in central Virginia late last week. According to an article posted on the WJLA website, when Sabrina Green ran to the scene of the accident, she found her daughter Tori lying on the side of the road, and her niece, Jaiden under the truck.

This is the nightmare of the thousands of mothers and fathers working desperately within Howard County to prevent industrial operations of any kind from operating on ag preserve farmland in their neighborhood. This is why we've been fighting for the past three years. This is why we will continue to fight if Howard County leadership takes measures to allow industrial truck traffic to put our children at risk of never coming home from school, on what should be just another ordinary day.

Throughout our campaign to eliminate industrial operations on ag preserve farmland, we have stressed the dangers of large tractor trailers operating on rural roads that are winding, have limited sight distance, and were not constructed to withstand the rigors of such traffic. We cannot in good conscience sit back and allow a similar tragedy to play out in Howard County, with more children dying in accidents that should never have been allowed the possibility of happening in the first place.

Sadly, however, that's exactly where our current leadership seems to be taking us. Attached are recent photos from an industrial processing operation being allowed to operate on ag preserve farmland in spite of the current regulations of CB-20 that prohibit it.

While I'm sure that the news last week did not escape your attention, I wanted to highlight it as a reminder of the fight that will be ahead of us all if the mulching and composting ZRA to be issued shortly by DPZ does not maintain the protections to Howard County and State of Maryland ag preserve farmland now afforded to the rural communities under CB-20.

Thank you for giving this matter the attention and focus it needs now from our Howard County leadership.

Best,
John Tegeris, PhD
President, DRPS









