



# Howard County

## Agricultural Land Preservation Program

### MEMORANDUM

**Subject:** Testimony for Sharp Property Installment Purchase Agreement

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

**Through:** Marsha S. McLaughlin, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

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

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

**Date:** July 1, 2014

The Department of Planning and Zoning, of which the Agricultural Land Preservation Program is a part, supports Council Bill No. -2014. This bill approves an Installment Purchase Agreement to acquire an agricultural preservation easement on property owned by Charles, Denise and Alan Sharp. 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 Sharp property would preserve 57 acres of productive farmland in the County, adding to the over 20,700 acres that have been preserved to date. The easement will cost \$1,658,400 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 Sharp easement will be \$1,907,318. This farm is desirable due to its high percentage of land in active agricultural use and the large amount of preserved land nearby and immediately adjacent to the property.

The property is currently owned by Michael and Victoria Egan, and the Sharps are contract purchasers. Prior to easement settlement and issuance of the IPA, the property will have transferred to the Sharps.

Having met all eligibility criteria for the acquisition of an agricultural preservation easement, staff supports Council Bill No. -2014 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  
Sharp File