



Howard County

Agricultural Land Preservation Program

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Testimony for the Harrison Property Installment Purchase Agreement

To: Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Administration

Through: Lynda Eisenberg, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)

Through: Joy Levy, Agricultural Land Preservation Program Administrator, DPZ

From: Lauren Longo, Planner I, DPZ

Date: March 10, 2025

The Department of Planning and Zoning supports Council Bill No. ___ -2025. This bill approves an Installment Purchase Agreement to acquire an agricultural preservation easement on a property owned by Jeffrey and Sue Harrison. Section 15.507(e)(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 66.7-acre Harrison farm is located on the western side of Long Corner Road in Mount Airy and produces a mixture of corn, soybeans, wheat and hay on the 80% of the property that is engaged in active agricultural use. The farm is composed of approximately 53 acres of tillable crop land and about 14 acres of woodland, and contains 58% Class I, II and III soils. Sixty-five percent of the property is immediately adjacent to preserved land and is within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of about 740 acres of preserved land. The Harrisons have a longstanding relationship with both Howard and Carroll County Soil Conservation districts, and their Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan has been implemented with no major resource concerns. The property is currently unimproved and will retain the right to build a principal dwelling

Fiscal Impact Analysis:

The purchase price of the Harrison easement is \$2,307,900, however; when twice yearly interest payments over 15 years are factored in, the overall cost will be \$2,703,704. The funding comes from the 25% portion of the 1% local transfer tax that is dedicated to the Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

Jeffrey and Sue Harrison will be paid 10% of the purchase price in cash at settlement. The balance will be paid through the Installment Purchase Agreement in 15 equal yearly installments. The owner will also receive twice yearly interest payments on the remaining principal over the 15-year term. Please see the attached draft amortization schedule for detailed payments. There are no other expenditures associated with the Harrison acquisition. The current ALPP staff member manages all aspects of the acquisition process.

Having met all eligibility criteria for the acquisition of an agricultural preservation easement, staff supports Council Bill No. ___ -2025.

cc: Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator, Department of Administration
Rafiu Ighile, Director, Department of Finance
Lisa Bagrosky, Senior Assistant County Solicitor, Office of Law