



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: *Testimony for Council Bill XX-2025 : Agricultural Zoning Regulation Amendment 217*

To: *Brandee Ganz, County Administrative Officer*

From: *Lynda Eisenberg, AICP, Director*

Date: *October 23, 2025*

The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) supports Council Bill XX-2025. The proposed zoning regulation amendment aims to reduce conflicts in the current zoning code, add opportunities for agritourism, and implement goals and policies of HoCo By Design.

Major recommendations of the bill are:

- Update and add definitions pertaining agriculture and agricultural uses
- Revise the Agritourism Special Farm Permit
- Add **Incidental Outdoor Stays** and **Small-Scale Agritourism** as Special Farm Permit uses
- Modify **Bed and Breakfast Inn** regulations on ALPP properties
- Update allowed uses and restrictions for ALPP properties
- Rename **Limited Social Assembly** to **Rural Venue Space**
- Rename **Farm Winery and Brewery** to **Farm Alcohol Producer**
- Increase allowable lot coverage for detached accessory structures on RC and RR zoned single-family properties.

This Zoning Regulation Amendment originated from an Agricultural focus group that convened in 2021, composed of representatives from the farming community, the Economic Development Authority, the Office of Agriculture, and the Department of Planning and Zoning. Since then, multiple stakeholder meetings have been held with farmers, focus group members, the Agricultural Board, and the Farm Bureau. On October 9, 2025, ZRA-217 was presented to the Howard County Planning Board for its recommendations. The council filed version is a product of these efforts.

There are no fiscal impacts associated with adoption of this Council Bill. Given the reasons stated above, DPZ supports Council Bill XX-2025 and appreciates Council's consideration.

cc: Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator, Department of Administration
Angela Cabellon, Chief of Staff
Brian Shepter, Deputy Chief of Staff
Gary W. Kuc, County Solicitor, Office of Law