

Council Bill 74-2025 (ZRA217) REVISED Fiscal Analysis

Introduced: November 3, 2025

Fiscal Manager: Owen Kahn

Legislative Intent: This legislation makes various changes to the zoning regulations governing agritourism and other agriculture and farm focused businesses.

ANALYSIS

Fiscal Impact:

This legislation will not have an impact on the County budget because there are no revenues or costs associated with Zoning Regulation Amendments (ZRA). Any potential costs for code enforcement and staff would be absorbed by the Department of Planning and Zoning's (DPZ) existing budget. Code enforcement is complaint driven so enforcement would only occur if there were complaints against an agritourism business based on regulations amended by this ZRA.

According to DPZ, the changes in the zoning regulations are designed to “reduce conflicts in the current zoning code” and “add opportunities” for agritourism.

An economic impact analysis on how these zoning changes may affect agritourism businesses has not been conducted.

Budget Implications:

- N/A.

Other Notes:

According to the [US Department of Agriculture 2022 Census of Agriculture](#), the number of farms operating agritourism businesses in Howard County has increased from 15 in 2017 to 23 in 2022.¹ Employment grew from 527 positions in 2027 to 623 positions in 2022. These farms have had their net cash income decrease from \$2 million in 2017 to only \$483,000 in 2022. If not for the 83% increase in income from farm related services, including agritourism, these businesses would likely have been operating at a net loss. See the table below from the Economic Development Authority, using the same 2022 Census of Agriculture data.

Metric	2017 Value	2022 Value	\$ Change	% Change
Total Income from Farm-Related Sources, including agritourism, renting land, etc.	\$3,988,000	\$7,311,000	\$3,323,000	83.40%
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold, including sale of crops and livestock	\$27,259,000	\$29,631,000	\$2,372,000	8.70%
Total Farm Production Expenses	(\$29,396,000)	(\$36,685,000)	(\$7,289,000)	-24.80%
Net Cash Farm Income	\$2,091,000	\$483,000	(\$1,608,000)	-76.90%

¹ Complete report Page 268