

CB 3-2015

Thank you for hearing my testimony this evening. My name is Lori Lilly and I live in Woodstock. I work part-time for our County's Restoring the Environment and Developing Youth (READY) program and also have recently started my own environmental consulting business operating out of Howard County. I live at the Howard County Conservancy where my husband and I serve as care-takers and where we do our best to live a sustainable lifestyle with our family. To me, this means growing my own vegetables in the summer, purchasing foods grown locally, consuming goods wisely and in accordance with my values and supporting efforts that protect and restore our natural resources, especially here in Howard County. I am actively involved with the Howard County Watershed Stewards Academy as well as with the Ellicott City Partnership's Clean Safe and Green Committee where we are focusing our efforts on community outreach and education regarding flooding, trash and other Town concerns. In my local efforts, I have worked closely with several County Departments. I've found the Office of Environmental Sustainability to be the most helpful and effective County Department for supporting my citizen-based work. I, along with 32 other citizens, wrote to County Executive Kittleman and the County Council in early December, describing how much we value this County Department and requesting that you support the functionality of OES by leaving budget and staffing intact and re-appointing a new Director.

I came here tonight, thankful that the OES is still intact, and to offer support for Bill 3-2015 that would broaden the scope of services of OES to include economic and agricultural sustainability and change the name of the department to the Office of Community Sustainability. As someone that works tirelessly on behalf of protection and restoration of natural resources in Howard County, as a strong supporter of local agriculture and sustainable food systems, and as a small business owner, I think that this change to the OES will be very beneficial to the economic and environmental engines in our County. With the East/West divide that we have and the unique mix of urban, suburban and rural land uses, the Office will be better positioned to serve as a central organizer and administrator of sustainability initiatives across these three sectors. That being said, I am a little concerned about the scope of the Office being expanded to these sectors with "no fiscal impact," which I assume to mean that no additional staff or resources will be supplied to undertake these new efforts. In the world of environmental regulatory compliance, we hear the term "un-funded mandate" frequently and, although I generally am supportive of this change in the Office in principle, I hope that the means necessary to carry out the new mission is adequately supported. I do not think that any of us would like to see a well-intentioned initiative fall flat on its face due to inadequate resources.

In closing, I hope that you will support the broadened scope and name change for the OES per Bill ³-2015 and trust that you and the Administration will look carefully at the details of the proposal to ensure its successful launch.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

