



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony on Council Resolution No. 23-2013
Pricing Formula for the Agricultural Land Preservation Program

To: Lonnie Robbins, Chief Administrative Office
Department of County Administration

Through: Marsha McLaughlin, Director
Department of Planning and Zoning

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

Date: February 11, 2013

The Department of Planning and Zoning supports Council Resolution No. 23–2013, which amends the formula used to determine the price the County pays when purchasing development rights under the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP). The pricing formula must be adopted by County Council Resolution and was last amended in 2006.

The proposed amendment modifies the additional points section of the pricing formula in several ways to reflect current County priorities. By adding a maximum of 100 points for protection of the Green Infrastructure Network, the proposed scoring system will award applicants with significant ecological resources on their properties a financial incentive to protect them. The General Plan recognizes that one purpose of the County’s Green Infrastructure Network is to enable the County to consider important natural resources when acquiring agricultural, environmental, and other land preservation easements. The points awarded will be based on the acreage and location within the network and on the habitat value of the natural resources present. The property owner must agree to develop and implement a Habitat Management Plan for the property located within the network.

The 100 additional points being added by Green Infrastructure will be compensated for by eliminating the “Heritage Farm” and “Optional ALPB Points” criteria. Since the updated ALPP aims to preserve the land of all interested property owners, and will not be a competitive process, the Agricultural Land Preservation Board’s discretionary points are no longer necessary to establish a ranking order.

As for fiscal impact, amending the pricing formula will have minimal to no impact on staff workloads or the Department’s operating budget.

cc: Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator, Department of County Administration
Stan Milesky, Director, Department of Finance
Ray Wacks, Administrator, Office of Budget
Beth Burgess, Chief, Resource Conservation Division