



Montgomery County 2022 Candidate Questionnaire

Personal Information:

Name Eric Luedtke

What Office Are You Seeking in the 2022 Election? Delegate, District 14

Where Can Voters Learn More About Your Positions Or Contact Your Campaign?

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Please Answer the Following Questions- responses will posted in their entirety and will not be edited.

Someone new to Montgomery County may ask, "What's the Ag Reserve and why is it important?" What's your answer?

The Ag Reserve is on of the best things Montgomery County has ever done. In the 1980's, we committed ourselves to permanently preserving almost 100,000 acres of agricultural land in the northern part of the county. While nearby counties have seen farming wiped out and most of their open space paved, our county has been able to hold onto its agricultural heritage and protect the largest stretch of open space in the DC metropolitan area.

What is your vision for the future of the County's Agricultural Reserve? Briefly, how would you achieve that vision?

I am committed to maintaining the agricultural reserve and strengthening the protections for its preservation. We need to continue to invest in agricultural easements within the reserve, particularly Building Lot Termination easements that will provide the final permanent protection to much of the reserve's land. I am also committed to working with farmers to ensure the economic viability of their agricultural operations.

What are your priorities regarding stewardship of the County's natural resources (water, forests, open spaces) and parkland?

I have been and will continue to be a champion for preservation and stewardship of natural resources. This past session, I wrote and passed the Great Maryland Outdoors Act, which will make significant new investments in stewardship of Patuxent River State Park, Monocacy NRMA, and Seneca Creek State Park. I also secured permanent increased funding for the Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund which seeks to improve forestry practices statewide. And while it did not pass this year, I plan to reintroduce the Maryland the Beautiful Act to commit Maryland to preserve 30% of its lands by 2030 and help land trusts to more quickly respond to opportunities to purchase land.

What role will you play with regard to ensure that we safeguard our drinking water supply both surface and groundwater?

My district includes both WSSC drinking water reservoirs along the Patuxent River, so I have long been involved in conversations regarding safe drinking water. One of the most important things we can do to ensure our drinking water supply over the long term is to preserve land and, in particular, preserve forests. I have supported efforts to strengthen land preservation along in the Patuxent watershed for

exactly this reason.

What are your top priorities to help the County address climate change? What role will the Ag Reserve play?

Farming and forestry practices play a large role in carbon sequestration, so preservation of the reserve and implementation of best practices are essential. I don't support large scale conversion of Montgomery County farmland to solar energy production. As an alternative, I successfully sponsored legislation this year to reduce tax and regulatory barriers to building solar facilities on rooftops, landfills, clean fills, and brownfields. And I think we should explore the potential for agrivoltaics - which allow energy production while continuing to have productive agriculture on the same land - as an alternative to large solar fields that put prime productive farmland out of commission.

What more can be done to support our local farm businesses and rural communities?

I have long supported efforts to improve economic opportunities for farms and rural communities. We should continue to support the cottage food industries that have popped up in rural areas, and continue to provide opportunities for farm breweries, wineries, and distilleries. We need to continue broad support for farmers markets and CSAs. We should work to identify new options for supporting FDA certified meat processing plants to assist those farms that are raising livestock in finding more affordable processors. And across the board we need to invest in high-quality high-speed broadband.

What are your regional transportation priorities? Do you support M83 and an additional Potomac bridge and outer beltway through the Reserve or adjacent rural zones?

I oppose a second crossing and an outer beltway. I do not believe construction of M83 is necessary to address traffic congestion in the upcounty. I support significant investments to expand MARC rail service and helped secure funding for planning of construction of the MD 355 BRT line.

How should our County manage its solid waste? What role should incineration, composting and recycling play?

The first advocacy effort I was ever involved in was in opposition to the county's incinerator. I believe we should allow the current incinerator contract end and then close the incinerator. There are other alternative to dealing with municipal solid waste that don't involve polluting the air we breathe. In the meantime, I support significant investments in composting in the county and believe we should further strengthen our recycling programs.

What are your views on the general plan update "Thrive 2050," both the process and the draft now before the Council?

I support Thrive 2050.

Do you believe that the way that local government branches, state entities, and the public currently interact can be improved? If so, what steps would you take?

I believe in radical transparency and in growing opportunities for public input. The development and widespread acceptance of new remote access technologies during COVID have created an opportunity for expanded public input in governmental processes. In Annapolis, this means that we have the opportunity to allow for hybrid testimony, where members of the public have the option of either coming to testify in person or testifying remotely, a practice I strongly support.