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

Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve is the section of the county that's dedicated to and protects farms, forests, and fields. Concentrated in the western and northern areas of the county, the Reserve includes over 93,000 acres of protected land and is home to many important waterways. Originally from Gaithersburg, I can recall many memories that make the Ag Reserve important to me - picking apples and pumpkins from local farms every fall, camping in the area's parks, hiking near the Potomac River and Sugarloaf Mountain, and, more recently, enjoying the beautiful views when running and the great wineries when relaxing.

The Ag Reserve is important to the county through both an environmental and economic perspective. Ten Mile Creek is one of the healthiest waterways in the region, and Little Seneca Reservoir provides emergency drinking water supply for millions in the D.C. area. The Reserve's hundreds of farms provide millions to the economy and improve our quality of life.

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

The specific environmental issues that I'd prioritize as a delegate in the General Assembly include:

1. Supporting legislation that would transition us to eventual 100% of our electricity coming from renewable sources;
2. Rejecting pipeline building under the Potomac River and C&O Canal; and
3. Strengthening the Forest Conservation Act to provide a clear definition of ecologically important areas and transparent criteria to be considered when a developer proposes to clear priority forests, and other updates.

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

Including priorities I discussed above, my vision for the future of the Ag Reserve specifically include:

- Full funding (lock-box status) of Program Open Space, as funding for the program is vulnerable
- Concentrating development in already developed areas, protecting the rural nature of the Ag Reserve
- Protecting Ten Mile Creek, one of the healthiest waterways in the region, from sewage plans with harmful environmental impact and from pollution sources
- Protecting the Potomac River the Little Seneca Reservoir and the regional estuary from contamination, rejecting pipeline building
- Strengthening the Forest Conservation Act (see above)
- Supporting policies that help farmers institute sustainable farming practices (organic farming, cover crops, crop rotation, etc.) which would improve the health of communities and our waterways
- Supporting local farms, farmers markets, and CSAs
- Prioritizing and improving public transportation rather than building lots of new roads

5 Can you identify some of the top challenges to the Reserve's local agriculture and what actions you would take, if elected, to address them?

Development is a threat to the Reserve, and this includes the the abuse of child lots, the pressure to add more roads to the area (including a possible bridge over the Potomac that would bisect the agricultural reserve), and more. As I've stated earlier, I believe we should prioritize public transit and not focus on building roads, especially in areas as important as the Ag Reserve. The challenges related to keeping farming viable for the next generation are also difficult, and as I mentioned earlier, agricultural education would help.

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

While investing in and improving public transportation, we should keep rural and low-income communities in mind and ensure that transportation barriers to fresh food outlets are addressed. This would mean making sure that public transit stops exist in ways that address food deserts. I also support farmers markets and would like to see how we can support them as a state. Some cities that fund healthy food initiatives, like Boston, allow SNAP, WIC, and SSI users to receive double vouchers to increase their purchases of fruits and vegetables.

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

I support waste reduction, including:

- A statewide ban of foam containers (Styrofoam products), since these are single-use and terrible for the environment (and are already banned in Montgomery County)
- Food waste recovery programs (French law forbids food waste by supermarkets, and the Food Recovery Network on college campuses donates perishable food to people in need)
- Encouraging counties to develop robust composting programs
- Reinstating the best available technology requirement for septic systems, which would help reduce nitrogen pollution in our waterways from septic systems
- Reducing our reliance on trash incineration (as this emits greenhouse gases and toxic pollutants) while increasing the air quality standards for these plants

8 How can we expand the role the County's schools play in the support of a healthy local food system and the success of local agriculture? Do you support a rural schools' policy that provides equity for Reserve cluster schools acknowledging the unique nature of schools in region set aside for farmland and open space preservation?

County schools can (and I support):

- Support local farms and farmers markets by purchasing food from them when possible
- Include sustainable agriculture as an area of study, encouraging educational field trips to the Reserve
- Include local examples and trips to the Reserve when studying environmental stewardship
- Equity for Reserve cluster schools

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- 9 **Currently the County is exploring how best to support a strong agricultural economy through agritourism and new farming enterprises such as on farm breweries and wineries. What are your thoughts about how best to advance on farm activities within the context of the master plan?**

Personally, I really enjoy going to Rocklands Farm and think that their winery and events are wonderful. Agritourism is a great way to promote our Ag Reserve and can definitely help draw community support for the region. I would encourage agritourism and agricultural education but would do so while preserving the purpose of the Ag Reserve, ensuring that increased tourism doesn't result in increased development.

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- 10 **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?**

As someone who has commuted via the RideOn and the Metro, I know that these services are in need of improvement in terms of reliability and overall service. During SafeTrack, while necessary to complete repairs, the system was even less reliable and sections of the Red Line were shut down at times, forcing people off their everyday public transportation commuting routine. The bottom line is that we need dedicated funding for the Metro, so that the system doesn't have to rely on subsidies or compete with other funding priorities for Maryland, D.C., and Virginia.

I support prioritizing and improving public transportation rather than building lots of new roads - including M83 and an outer beltway. Studies have shown that increasing the size and number of roads does not result in long-term reductions in traffic.