

Name: **Lorig Charkoudian**
Address: Takoma Park
What office are you seeking?: D20 State Delegate
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: <http://lorigd20.com/>

2 **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 a treasure. It is crucial to maintain open conservation space for all of the environmental benefits, and it is crucial to maintain farm land to build a strong local food system.

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

Maintaining these natural resources is a priority.

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

I would like to see the Ag Reserve serve as a foundation for a resilient, sustainable, local food system. I would like more new farmers to be able to get started. I am especially interested in supporting farmers who come to the work with passion and interest, but limited assets. I would like to see more support for these farmers to get started. Then I hope to connect the Ag Reserve and other local agricultural areas to a regional food hub for aggregation and distribution, in order to open up new markets for small farmers. I would also like to connect these farmers to local producers to increase value added product that is purely local.

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?**

I think one significant challenge is the multi-national corporate dominance in our food systems. This system is bad for the environment, our physical health, and our economy. Building a strong local food system, with a focus on sustainable agricultural practices can address many of these issues. As a delegate, I hope to focus on a regional food hub for aggregation and distribution to increase small farmer access to markets, as well as focus on increasing state procurement of locally grown food.

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

As a delegate, I hope to focus on a regional food hub for aggregation and distribution to increase small farmer access to markets, as well as focus on increasing state procurement of locally grown food.

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

We need to put Maryland on a path to a zero waste economy. I support a 5 cent tax on plastic bags state wide, as well as a deposit fee on bottles and cans. This can significantly increase recycling and the market for recycled content products. We can also make significant efforts to decrease food waste through food recovery, and increased composting. We should phase out trash incineration.

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- 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?**

Under my leadership as President of Crossroads Community Food Network, we significantly increased our healthy eating programs in schools. We must take this a step further and increase the health of school meals, while prioritizing inclusion of locally grown foods.

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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?**

Under my leadership as President, Crossroads Community Food Network build a shared use kitchen and a micro-enterprise development program to support low income individuals to start small food businesses. We should scale up these opportunities for processing and value added products through a commercial kitchen, breweries, wineries on the Ag Reserve.

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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?**

We must prioritize investment in public transportation. I don't support road widening efforts nor do I support a Potomac bridge.