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Address: Town of Chevy Chase
What office are you seeking?: State House of Delegates (D-18)
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: www.rubinfordelegate.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 90,000 acres of land designated for agricultural use under a farmland protection program established by the Montgomery County Council in 1980. Its purpose is to promote agricultural practices in the area, preserve green space, prevent reckless development, support local farmers, provide recreational opportunities and parkland, and protect historic sites.

I am a strong proponent of maintaining agricultural lands and have deep personal experience with agriculture. I lived in a farming community for two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in rural Costa Rica, where I worked for a local agricultural center. I also have strong federal government experience in sustainable development, having managed renewable energy programs at the Department of Energy and the U.S. Agency for International Development. As an elected Member of the Town Council, I am keenly aware of the need to plan and develop our land resources responsibly, and I believe the Ag Reserve does just that.

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

I believe that we must take a holistic approach when protecting the County's natural resources, which means placing heavy emphasis on engaging the multiple stakeholders impacted by land use decision-making. County agencies must be pressed to listen to and work with those directly affected by such decisions. Doing so will help to ensure long term sustainability of natural resource decisions that benefit the entirety of Maryland. Specifically, I would advance four core priorities. First, I would support legislation that protects full funding (lock-box status) of Program Open Space. Second, I would strongly support regional and statewide efforts to both protect and clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Third, I would actively advocate for a new energy economy in Maryland to help protect our rural open spaces from exploitation for energy extraction. Lastly, I would make reforestation a top priority, as it is also a critical driver of environmental sustainability and economic growth.

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

I would support efforts to incentivize local farmers within the Ag Reserve to create Farmers Markets and strengthen relationships with communities that are food deserts. Ideally, these Farmers Markets would be open on a daily basis. They could also become food cooperatives, although this is not necessary. And I would press for legislation to subsidize the farmers who sell at the Farmers Market to a fair market rate, so that they could have a guaranteed revenue stream, as long as they committed to both keeping prices low and to seeking to sell to residents of that community. Lastly, I would join the Rural Caucus in Annapolis, to ensure that I am engaging rural communities as actively as possible.

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?

Irresponsible development projects, poor transportation planning, and the loss of farming knowledge and culture seem to be the biggest threats to the Reserve. As a Delegate, I will always champion sustainable practices, rigorous environmental review standards, and intensive community buy in when considering large infrastructure programs. I believe Montgomery County can accommodate growth and development without sacrificing its natural resources or its residents' quality of life. When it comes to supporting farmers, I would fight to expand educational opportunities at both the High School and Community College level, as well promote business solutions that are tailored to rural needs, so the next generation of farmers can thrive and get the most from the Reserve.

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

When I served in the Peace Corps as an Environmental Education Volunteer, I lived in a small agricultural village in rural Costa Rica. My neighbors were farmers who were deeply concerned about protecting their environment, the animals and the trees, while also earning a living to sustain their families. This experience seared in me the importance of working closely with farmers and local communities to help them to meet both their economic and environmental goals. As a result, I engaged in multiple educational projects with them, such as safe pesticide use and organic composting for use in farming, that helped them to meet these goals. I would strongly support farmers in developing their work to meet the demands of a changing market, such as promoting organically grown products ,and would therefore advocate for legislation to help support both the training needed to achieve such goals and the financial support needed to make it happen.

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

Trash incineration should be the last resort for the elimination of waste and air quality standards must be raised for incineration plants. A core part of my work as an environmental educator in the Peace Corps was focused on recycling and the proper treatment of waste, including composting. I'm an active proponent of composting in the Town of Chevy Chase as a Council Member, and am the Council's liaison to our town's Environment and Climate' committee. I believe that we should have state-wide composting in order to create a market for this valuable commodity, as well as to reduce landfill waste. I also believe that we should provide incentives for food markets in the state to use glass containers as much as possible for liquid products. Lastly, we should ensure that all of our public schools are composting and using recyclable materials, and promoting these efforts as a teaching tool for students on how to better manage trash disposal.

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?

Like any industry, agriculture requires specialty schools, academies and training centers to refine its craft and stay abreast of new technologies and techniques. I would be interested in learning more about Reserve

cluster schools and how we can identify opportunities for students who wish to pursue careers in agriculture.

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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?**

I would welcome a meeting with members of the MCA to discuss new business solutions for farmers. Agritourism, especially since such large urban markets are nearby, can tremendous potential. The same goes for farm breweries and wineries, as there are large nearby markets. However, to be effective, a close partnership between rural entrepreneurs and the state government must be forged, to ensure access to capital, training, and marketing support. On a personal level, I know how often my wife and I like to get out of the city with our three young daughters. I know that we greatly benefit from the ingenuity of these rural entrepreneurs.

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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 reduce congestion in the suburban areas, but that we should not do it by destroying rural zones in the process. Currently, the State Department of Transportation is moving rapidly ahead with minimal oversight and community input. As a Council Member in the Town of Chevy Chase, I have seen first-hand the results of such actions. This is why I recently testified in support of Delegate Al Carr's bill to create an Office of Transportation Oversight (H.B. 1641). I will fight hard to ensure that communities impacted by transportation projects have a strong voice in the process. I would press for legislation to create an independent commission akin to a Public Utility Commission for regional transportation. I would support an increase in truck registration fees, to preferably be imposed in a uniform manner in the tri-state DMV area on heavy trucks. On M83, I believe that all transportation options must be explored to reduce congestion. That includes alternatives like Rapid Bus Transit