

To: Council President Sidney Katz and members of the Montgomery County Council

From: West Montgomery County Citizens Association

RE: ZTA 20-01 Commercial Solar Facilities in the Agricultural Reserve

The Potomac Subregion Master Plan clearly states our Subregion's role as a buffer to the Agricultural Reserve. We have long supported retention of this unique treasure to insure the continuation of farming in Montgomery County. With the advance of climate change and the crisis it hearkens it is more important than ever to protect our future food supply and forest resources. Large scale industrial solar arrays have no place in the Reserve.

Providing solar energy is also important to mitigating climate change and we support siting these facilities in areas where they make sense. Compatible sites are those already developed. Large parking lots are suitable and additionally provide shade. Until all possibilities have been explored, there is no excuse for sacrificing farmland.

Additionally, this ZTA is premature and should not be considered until the County's Climate Action Plan and General Plan refinement process are completed. Even then, a countywide study to determine where to place large scale industrial solar will prevent the 'unintended consequences' of adopting a hasty solution.

Therefore, we oppose this ZTA and urge the Council to do the same. It is premature, not well thought out, and to move forward endangers one of our most valuable resources to combat climate change. The land we need to hold for the production of food, fiber and forests, as well as clean air and water, is too important to sacrifice.

Sincerely,

Susanne Lee

President

West Montgomery County Citizens Association