



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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County Executive

News Release

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County Executive Gardner Advances Legislation to Support Family Farms

FREDERICK, Md. – Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner today unveiled legislation to support multi-generational farming. The bill creates a more transparent process for farmers who want to follow the longstanding tradition of carving off housing lots on their property so family members can stay on the farm and support the farm operation. Current law allows children of farmers to apply for a waiver of an impact fee if they build on these lots. Executive Gardner's proposal would allow additional family members to apply for the waiver.

"Family support is imperative to many agricultural operations in Frederick County," Executive Gardner said at a public information briefing Tuesday. "I want to ensure that agriculture remains a viable industry in our community. This bill is one step to help ensure that future generations can have a long-term bright future."

The proposed bill updates and clarifies the existing law, which took effect in 2014. The proposed legislation:

- Defines a qualifying farmer as a full-time farmer who earns a majority of his or her gross income from agricultural over the past three years.
- Requires the lot being subdivided from the farm to be no more than 2 acres. Previously, the size of the new lot was not defined.
- Allows parents and siblings of the farmer to be eligible for the program. Currently, only children are eligible for a waiver.
- Clarifies that farms owned by a trust or a limited liability corporation may be eligible.
- Requires the person receiving the waiver to show they provide substantial help and support to the farm operation. They must work an average of at least 20 hours a week providing either physical or administrative support to the farming operation throughout the calendar year.

A copy of the proposed legislation is available for review online at
www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Executive.

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