



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Harford County Executive Glassman Proposes to Protect Nearly 2,500 Acres from Development in FY19;
Largest Total Acreage in a Decade**

BEL AIR, Md., (May 9, 2018) - Harford County will permanently protect 2,425 acres of farmland from development under a series of bills introduced to the County Council Tuesday at the request of County Executive Barry Glassman. If approved, the legislation would allow the county to execute contracts eliminating 211 development rights through easements on 22 farms. The easements totaling \$14,875,221 would be paid for with dedicated funds from a portion of the county's transfer tax, in accordance with established law and the requirements of the Harford County Agricultural Land Preservation program. The properties would represent the largest total acreage preserved at one time in Harford County in a decade.

"I am proud to set a new record for ag preservation," County Executive Barry Glassman said. "These farms have some of the best soils in Harford County, so placing them in our preservation program supports growth in agriculture and balances growth in other sectors of the economy. In addition, more than 1,000 acres, or 40% of the total, are in the new incentive area we created in 2017 as a firewall against future expansion of the development envelope in Creswell and Jarrettsville. The incentive program's success also adds green space to the area infrastructure as we move forward with the Churchville/Creswell study outlined in HarfordNEXT, the countywide master plan."

The purchase of development rights in the Harford County Agricultural Land Preservation program permanently extinguishes all pre-existing development potential of a particular property and is not used to offset development elsewhere in the county. Other than very limited rights reserved to the original grantor and their immediate family, no further residential subdivision is allowed, and the land is limited in perpetuity to agricultural use as defined in the zoning code. The grantor of the easement and all subsequent owners of the property retain full fee simple ownership of the land, but are bound by the terms of the Deed of Easement, which is recorded in the Land Records of the county.

Properties are selected for the program by the Harford County Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board, based on a legislatively established ranking that considers factors such as soil quality, acreage, development rights and location.

Harford County dedicates one-half of the revenue generated by a 1% transfer tax on all real property transactions countywide to fund the program, with offer cycles typically occurring annually. No other use for this funding is allowed under existing law.

The bills introduced Tuesday will have a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 12, 2018.

The full text of the bills, one for each property, are available online at <http://hcgweb01.harfordcountymd.gov/legislation/>.

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