



April 1, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
2 West Miller Senate office Building S
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Testimony of Victoria Leonard, Chair, Committee for Montgomery on
HB 1228: Department of Commerce - Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve Study MC 15-25
Position: FAVORABLE**

Thank you Chair Feldman and members of the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 1228. My name is Victoria Leonard, and I am the 2024/25 Chair of the Committee for Montgomery. The Committee for Montgomery (CfM) is a cross-section of Montgomery County business, labor, education, civic, arts, and community-based organizations. Our mission is to advocate in Annapolis on issues of importance to Montgomery County and the State.

CfM supports HB 1228. The bill requires the Maryland Department of Commerce—in coordination with the Montgomery County Planning Board, the Montgomery County Office of Agricultural Services, the University of Maryland Extension – Montgomery County, and Visit Montgomery—to study the tourist and visitor economy of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve, to help inform how best to promote and preserve the Ag Reserve. The Department must report its findings to the members of the Montgomery County State Delegation by June 30, 2026. The bill reflects recommendations developed during a local summit that took place last year focused on growing tourism to support small nonprofit organizations and businesses located in the Ag Reserve.

We urge a favorable report on HB 1228.

Sincerely,

Victoria Leonard,
2024/25 Committee for Montgomery Chair