

February 17, 2020

Delegate Hettleman:

My name is Susan A. Schaffer. I live in Lutherville-Timonium and I am a mother, a grandmother, a working Occupational Therapist and a senior citizen.

My family has lived in Lutherville-Timonium for 24 years. Our house is situated within ¼ mile (as the crow flies) of a farm that grew industrial hemp in 2019.

For a period of about 4 months last year, during the summer and fall, my family experienced the unpleasantness of the foul odor emanating, round the clock, from the nearby hemp field. For several weeks we thought there were dead skunks in the neighborhood. We then learned it was a new hemp crop planted very close to our home. The disgustingly foul odor permeated our home almost continuously during that period of time. Any guests or our children who came to visit were disgusted by the odor on the road leading up to our home, in our house and in the bedrooms. We have a toddler granddaughter with respiratory issues and we are very concerned about the impact on her when she visits. We kept our windows closed and it still was apparent in our living rooms and bedrooms at all hours of the day and night. The odor negatively impacted our sleep.

We expect, at some point in the not too distant future, to sell our home as we face retirement, and we worry about the impact of this smell during approximately 1/3 of the year on property values. We would absolutely never consider purchasing a home in a neighborhood where this smell was so apparent upon visiting it with a realtor and learning that it is evident for 4 months of the year. This situation may be very new and there is no data to support a potential drop in property values, but common sense strongly suggests that if I (and my extended family and friends who weighed in) would not purchase a home with such an apparent environmental odor both external and internal to the home, others wouldn't either. And that is extremely worrisome with respect to the resultant anticipated drop in property value as I anticipate selling my house at some point in the next few years.

I support laws restricting hemp agriculture near residences. There are a number of communities in the USA who have already addressed this issue due to a variety of concerns and I believe there must be consideration of the positions not only of the farmers who are developing this newly approved crop, but also of the homeowners who are heavily invested in these neighborhoods.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan A. Schaffer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Susan A. Schaffer

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