



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 7

February 27, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman  
Chair, Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 861, *Environment - Stormwater Management - Agricultural Land*

Dear Chair Feldman,

I urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 861, Environment - Stormwater Management - Agricultural Land so agricultural operators in Montgomery County can operate free from overburdensome regulatory requirements and on an even playing field with their peers throughout the State.

Thank you Chair Feldman and Senator Zucker for putting this legislation forward and for your collaboration with local farmers and agricultural operators who have urged us to provide this flexibility.

The legislation would ensure that the Soil Conservation District, which is best suited to work collaboratively with farmers to achieve stormwater requirements, would play a leading role in this work. We understand Soil Conservation Districts are empowered to do this work in jurisdictions throughout the State. In Montgomery County, the Department of Permitting Services has taken the lead and consistently threatened to impose commercial-grade stormwater and building requirements on farmers despite other existing exemptions for agriculture and agritourism.

SB 861 would also clarify that all parts of an agricultural operation's business, including office and processing space, are exempt from certain commercial building permits just as the

agricultural activities already are. This is the subject of a local Montgomery County Council bill<sup>1</sup> that has broad support and that we expect the full Council will approve this spring.

Farmers and agricultural operators are a critical part of our local economy and to our mission of preserving our landmark Agricultural Reserve. We must support economic viability for farmers so agriculture remains a part of our communities for generations to come.

Thank you, again, to Chair Feldman and Senator Zucker for putting forward this measure and I respectfully ask the committee for a favorable report.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Luedtke", written in a cursive style.

Dawn Luedtke  
Montgomery County Councilmember  
District 7

cc: Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee

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<sup>1</sup> [apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllms/BillDetailsPage?RecordId=2895](https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllms/BillDetailsPage?RecordId=2895)