

Item 9 - Correspondence

From: [Claire SanNicolas](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Sunday, January 5, 2025 7:19:28 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Claire SanNicolas
clairegs@yahoo.com
12402 MILESTONE MANOR LN
GERMANTOWN, Maryland 20876

From: [Mary Nyamweya](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Sunday, January 5, 2025 8:06:52 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

The planning board staff report recommends denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan—because it does not meet the size and soil siting allowed for solar in the Ag Reserve.

I'm writing to support the planning staff's recommendation for denial.

Protection of prime soils on our precious farmland is a critical, vital priority. And the staff report clearly lays out how this proposed project does not meet MoCo's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve.

Solar developers should go elsewhere; this prime-soil land is for farmers (who already face enough obstacles leasing and farming land in the Ag Reserve).

The careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place—and must be respected.

We must remember that ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal. Please transmit this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Mary Nyamweya
nyamweya@aol.com
1701 Noyes Lane
Silver Spring , Maryland 20910

From: [Janene Smith](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Sunday, January 5, 2025 8:08:39 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Janene Smith
janenemsmith@gmail.com
15801 White Rock Road
Darnestown, Maryland 20878

From: [G. Drymalski](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Sunday, January 5, 2025 8:15:12 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

This is great news, but again, prime soils must be protected for farming purposes. The Ag Reserve's intention has always been to promote and protect farming in all its various forms. Solar panels installed on prime soils do not meet the criteria of farming.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

G. Drymalski
geri.drymalski@gmail.com
19946 lake park ct.
gerantown, Maryland 20874

From: [Shelley Jones](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Sunday, January 5, 2025 8:16:46 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

Dear Chair Harris,

I think we can all agree that supporting sustainable alternative energies such as solar is essential in these times of climate change, but I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

There are other more appropriate options for the construction of solar farms which would not threaten the unique and threatened resource of diverse farms in the area. Please do the right thing to make his a win-win for farmers and for solar energy.

Thank you,
Shelley Jones

Shelley Jones
shelleyjones63@gmail.com
8500 Garland Avenue

Takoma Park, Maryland 20912

From: [Barbara Falcigno](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Sunday, January 5, 2025 8:34:47 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

Please support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The Ag Reserve is just that - for farming. The carefully considered ZTA 20-01 allows solar on less than prime soils and this particular project does not meet that criteria.

When solar developers pay more than market rate to lease land, it is difficult to preserve it for farming. Listen to the staff report, deny this proposal, and transmit your decision to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Thank you.

Barbara Falcigno
Resident of Montgomery County for over 40 years

Barbara Falcigno
Falcigno@verizon.net
18160 Darnell Dr
Olney , Maryland 20832

From: [Melanie Kurimchak](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Sunday, January 5, 2025 8:40:31 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Melanie Kurimchak
mgkchak@gmail.com
12930 Prices Distillery Rd
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871

From: [Amanda Lombardo](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Sunday, January 5, 2025 8:41:39 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Amanda Lombardo
acml9598@gmail.com
17233 General Custer Way
Poolesville, Maryland 20837

From: [Victoria Capone](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 6:37:25 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Victoria Capone
vicki@vickicapone.com
17328 Whitaker Rd
POOLESVILLE, Maryland 20837

From: [Kathleen Bailey](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 7:11:41 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Kathleen Bailey
mainekb@gmail.com
105 Sheridan Ave
Takoma Park, Maryland 20912

From: [Evan Krichevsky](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 7:25:43 AM

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Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Evan Krichevsky
evank2@aol.com
9205 Copenhaver Drive
Potomac, Maryland 20854

From: [Sarah Defnet](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 7:33:54 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

We are counting on you to uphold the planning staff recommendation. Prime soils are for growing food not hosting solar panels. Solar panels on soil not suitable for farming is already a possibility - and let's utilize buildings and parking structures.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Sarah Defnet
defnet@verizon.net
18010 ELGIN RD
Poolesville, Maryland 20837

From: [Sharon Lundahl](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 8:05:39 AM

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Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Sharon Lundahl
sharonlundahl1@gmail.com
5125 Newport Ave
Bethesda, Maryland 20816

From: [Mary Pat Wilson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 8:52:37 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

For years, the Montgomery County Planning Board has touted the zag Reserve. To allow the solar industry to gobble up prime agricultural land is counter to the concept of preserving the Ag Reserve. The solar industry should look at industrial or commercial uses for solar and there are plenty of opportunities for this in Montgomery County.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Mary Pat Wilson
mrptwilson315@gmail.com
20211 W Hunter Td
Beallsville, Maryland 20839

From: [Christina Micek](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Does not Meet county's policies- please deny Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 12:30:40 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Christina Micek
cmicek@christinamicek.com
10301 Strathmore Hall St. #402
North Bethesda, Maryland 20852

From: [alice chalmers](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 12:32:55 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I have been working with local farmers since 2007.

Our region is in severe deficit of food production vs our food consumption. We produce less than 4% of what we eat.

Between climate change, disruption in the supply chain, price volatility of food, it is critical but absolutely possible for Montgomery County and Maryland to be able to generate at least one third of its food, but we can ONLY do it if we strategically protect our prime and productive soil. The reserve is THE area in the county that is left for the future of local food production at any kind of scale. The priority should be to find any other structure or land for solar implementation other than prime and productive soil.

TOP SOIL, the growing medium for plants and animal grazing is a valuable and limited resource. It takes hundreds to a thousand years to generate 3 centimeters (a bit over an inch) of top soil. We need to protect our prime and productive soil as we would any other strategic national and rare resource, for the survival and prosperity of our citizens and our state.

PLEASE look at the BIG PICTURE and support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan and upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve.

alice chalmers
aliceatsunbirdfarm@gmail.com
14100 FALLS ROAD
Cockeysville, Maryland 21030

From: [Dan Leggett](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 1:25:54 PM

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Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Dan Leggett
dleggett@rcn.com
24240 Peach Tree Rd
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871

From: [Elisabeth Curtz](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 1:27:01 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

Please act to adopt the recommendation of your planning staff to deny the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan. ZTA 20-01 did a fine job of balancing the need for new solar and the protection of prime farming areas within the Agricultural Reserve. The reserve is a unique and priceless resource for future generations and your support is needed to protect it from exploitative development!

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Elisabeth Curtz
curtzeli@gmail.com
9039 Sligo Creek Parkway, Apt 1709
SILVER SPRING, Maryland 20901

From: [Melissa Leone](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 1:33:00 PM

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Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Melissa Leone
mleonesellshomes@aol.com
14808 Fothergil Court
Burtonsville, Maryland 20866

From: [Marie Rojas](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 1:48:25 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

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Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

On a personal note, my husband and I have owned our historic 90 acre farm here in the Ag Reserve for the past 25 years. In the last two, we have gotten an increasing amount of solicitations from solar companies, promising to pay many times over what we currently pay our farmer to rent our crop fields. We feel very strongly that farming is a matter of national security! Without family farms growing crops that either feed people or livestock, we will be relying more and more on other countries to provide these essentials. This puts all of us at a disadvantage. The Ag Reserve is nationally recognized for preserving agriculture. This Chaberton project goes directly against this preservation of prime agricultural land and should be denied.

Marie Rojas
hortlady@aol.com

19000 Beallsville Rd
Beallsville, Maryland 20839

From: [Sophie Constantine](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 3:02:00 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Sophie Constantine
sophconstantine13@gmail.com
20800 White's Ferry Road
Poolesville, Maryland 20837

From: [Marcia Kingman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Written statement to Planning Board prior to January 9 public hearing re the Chaberton Sugarloaf application for Solar Collection System
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 3:36:09 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please update the League of Women of Montgomery County's mailing address to: 27 Wood Lane, Rockville, MD 20850.
Thank you.

On Jan 6, 2025, at 3:25 PM, Marcia Kingman <marcia.kingman@gmail.com> wrote:

Please find attached testimony from the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County regarding its opposition to the Chaberton Sugarloaf application to construct a Solar Collection System over 2 mw on Class 2 soil in the Agricultural Reserve.
Item #9 on the Planning Board January 9, 2025 agenda.

Mailing address: lwvmc@lwvmocomd.org

<MC Planning Board Sugarloaf Solar Jan 2025 final.docx>

Ralph Watkins and Joan Seigel
Co-Presidents,
League of Women Voters of Montgomery County



January 7, 2025

Letter to the Montgomery County Planning Board

Re: Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf application for Solar Collection System (SCS)

Dear Planning Board:

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) is a nonpartisan organization that works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League has studied and supported Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve (AR) from the time it was created by the 1980 *Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space*.

The League vigorously opposes approval of the Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf application for the development of a SCS in the Agricultural Reserve. Although the League strongly supports Montgomery County's and the state's commitment to clean energy through solar collection systems, we believe that upending the *Functional Master Plan's* promise to protect and preserve agriculture and rural open space in the AR zone runs counter to Montgomery County residents' desire for high quality of life and threatens the benefits residents receive from farming in the reserve.

The League looks to the Planning Board to safeguard that quality of life and to keep the promises it made to farmers as outlined in the *Functional Master Plan* and in *Thrive Montgomery 2050*. From our perspective, allowing business and industrial interests to preempt county zoning and master planning is abdicating that responsibility.

The League was one of more than 60 organizations that participated in the conversation surrounding zoning text amendment (ZTA) 20-01. The final ZTA allowed for SCS in the Agricultural Reserve and set the limits on those systems. Farmers have begun to install SCS as "accessory to agriculture," and several solar companies have won approval for their SCS applications while complying with ZTA 20-01. Chaberton has chosen to ignore zoning requirements and instead proposes to build a 4-megawatt SCS on Class II soils.

The League strongly urges the Planning Board to continue to encourage SCS as "accessory to farming" and community solar under the provisions of ZTA 20-01. We encourage the Board to look to rooftops, parking lots, and other sites for additional solar installations before jeopardizing the future of the Agricultural Reserve's farmland.

Ralph Watkins and Joan Siegel
Co-Presidents,
League of Women Voters of Montgomery County

From: [Carol Baxter](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 3:42:05 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

Please TRUST your planning staff's recommendation to DENY the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly proves that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve. Prime soils suitable for farming should remain devoted to farming; nature has provided only so much and we cannot assume that more can be created within our lifetimes.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 must remain in place. That bill allowed solar in the Reserve if built on less-than-prime soils. Changing that requirement would deprive a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Carol Baxter
ceegeebea@aol.com
110 Crossbow Lane
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

From: [William George](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 3:50:04 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I applaud your efforts. The Agricultural Reserve has always been a target for development of all kinds. Solar energy is a wave of our future, but, should not come by sacrificing the Agricultural Reserve. There are many other areas that could support solar. Parking lots, buildings, NIST, Department of Energy, and others quickly come to mind.

Thank you,
W. George

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

William George
joenemo@verizon.net
13026 Mill House Court
Germantown , Maryland 20874

From: [Lee McNair](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 4:29:51 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

In addition to everything mentioned below, I want to point out that food prices are increasing and we import a lot of our food which adds to those costs. We need to preserve our AG land while also encouraging more local food crops. Local food is both less expensive and more nutritious.

Certainly there is a place for solar and the County has allowed for this. However, solar can go many places we have not yet taken advantage of; food can only be grown on healthy, viable soil which should never be given over to any other usage!

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Lee McNair
dragonpern132@gmail.com
4707 Chevy Chase Drive
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

From: [Linda Standley](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 5:34:40 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

I recognize that farming is hard work and money is something that everyone needs more of, especially farmers. Let's think of more creative, ag friendly ways of raising their sources of income... not selling out to solar farms. Our beautiful rolling hills don't need to be marred in this way.

Thank you,
Linda Dunn Standley

Linda Standley
lingsmitty@gmail.com
23000 Mt Ephraim Road
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

From: [Caroline Taylor](#)
To: [Butler, Patrick](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Briefing on Solar - continuance Chaberton Sugarloaf mandatory referral
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 6:08:45 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Patrick,

Happy new year! Thank you for providing, per my request, the link to watch the recent staff briefing on the status of solar uses and processes in Montgomery County and before the Maryland PSC. I did watch the video and appreciate the diligence that staff employed. Also interested in the thoughtful questions from board members. I did want to note that a question came about whether or not there's any farming on class three or above soils. I believe you answered that there "is some," but I want to be clear that quite a lot of the farming, including orchards and table crops, are grown on class three and above soil. This is just a sampling:

Montgomery County Farmers Produce Crops on All Soil Types
 Source: Montgomery County Soils Classification Map

Farms on Soil Class 3	Farm Product	Of Note
Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard	Wine/Beer	Agri-tourism, Gateway to Sugarloaf Mountain
Rock Hill Orchard	Orchard Fruit	Pick Your Own/Nation's 1st Robotic Creamery/Md Ice Cream Trail
Water's Orchard	Orchard Fruit	MoCo's 1st Hard Cidery/Agritourism/Pick Your Own
Shepherd's Hey Farm	Sheep/Wool/Commodity Crops	Farm Tours/School Trips
Wildflower CSA Farm	Table Crops	New Farmer selling Table Crop Shares
Big Woods, Greg Glenn	Livestock, Regenerative Grazing	Rotational Sheep Operation to Build Soil

Soil Class 2 & 3	Farm Product	Of Note
Butler's Orchard	Pick Your Own	Soils are Class 2, 3 & lesser soils, Popular MoCo Farm
Rocklands Farm Winery	Wine/Beer/Meat/Eggs	Agritourism/Tours/camps/field trips/Events
Waredaca Brewing	Wine/Beer	Also Equestrian
Lewis Orchard	Table Crops	Orchard Trees are on Class 3 Soil
Eat the Rainbow Farm	Table Crops/Vegetable Plants	Popular CSA/Food Bank Producer
Cozzi Family Farm	Pasturized Eggs/Poultry/Vegs	Started new Farm Market in Poolesville, Expanded this year
Linden Farm, Greg Glenn	Regenerative Ag Pilot Program	Documenting Regenerative Ag restoration on 90 acres
Savage & Sons Farm	Meat/Eggs/Table Crops/Hay	Multi-Generation Farm with On-site Sales
David Scott/Oak Ridge Farm	Commodity Crops	265 Farm Acres in MoCo Ag Preservation Program
Beallsville Rd	Table Crops	Landowner Looking to Lease to Table Crop Producer

Soil Class 2	Farm Product	Of Note
Homestead Farm	Pick Your Own Fruit/Veg	Multi-Generation Farm, Agritourism, Popular School Trip Site
Kingsbury Orchard	Fruit Crops/Peaches/Plums	5th Generation Farm, Global Ecology Field Trips
One Acre Farm	Table Crops/CSA	Grows metric tons of produce for Manna Food per year
Farm at Our House	Table Crops	Provides Job Development for At-risk Residents
Bobbinawara Farm	Black Angus Beef/Herbs/Corn	Sells Hand Spun Wool Yarn
White Store Rd	Table Crops	Landowner Looking to Lease to Table Crop Producer

Montgomery Countryside Alliance     [MoCoAlliance.org](http://mocoalliance.org)

I am signed up to testify Thursday on the Chaberton Sugarloaf mandatory referral continuance item. We and colleagues remain opposed to the project and support staff recommendation of denial.

C
 Caroline Taylor, Executive Director
 Montgomery Countryside Alliance
 P.O. Box 24, Poolesville, Maryland 20837
 301-461-9831
<http://mocoalliance.org/>

"Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and designs, and she has more votes, a larger memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do." ~Wendell Berry

From: [Peter Hobby](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 6:22:15 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Peter Hobby
phobby@gmail.com
113 Valley Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20816-2634

From: lifeonearth@verizon.net
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: public hearing testimony from John Parrish
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 7:09:09 PM
Attachments: [M-83 Mid-County Highway, John Parrish.docx](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please see attached public hearing testimony from John Parrish for the January 9th hearing on the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways - 2024 Technical Update (Hearing #3).

Thank you - John Parrish

From: [Rebecca Chiampi](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 7:22:05 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Rebecca Chiampi
rchiampi@gmail.com
17411 Conoy road
Barnesville, Maryland 20838

From: [Celia Martin](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 8:41:28 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

Thank you for your public service. I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

There are best practices in Seattle, Portland and other places which provide incentives to power companies to help place solar near the source of the need - on rooftops and in residential neighborhoods. Germany has mats that residents can place outside for solar. We need the land for produce if we want to reduce transportation emissions related to food for MoCo; let's follow best practices for where to place solar.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Celia Martin
celiavmartin@outlook.com
5326 Falmouth RD
Bethesda, Maryland 20816

From: [Jim McDonald](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 10:42:52 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan, and any other solar project in the ag reserve.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Finally, please look at the FULLY COSTED benefits of these solar projects. The long term efficiency of these projects, including environmental damage and risk are not clear.

Jim McDonald

Jim McDonald
jjmcd82@gmail.com
17500 conoy rd
Barnsville , Maryland 20838

From: [Kevin Bowie](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Case 9733
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 10:43:04 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I live on 25.6 acres in the agricultural reserve of Montgomery County. I feel very strongly that once green space is gone we never get it back.

I understand that we need to create electric power through solar when it is possible. All of my own property is on class 1 and 2 soils.

I use it for horse pastures. I get offers online, e-mail, phone calls and letters in my mailbox offering large sums of money to rent my land.

I have solar power coming off my house into the grid. I am currently working to put it on my barn.

Please do not allow these large companies to turn the agricultural reserve prime soils into solar collection areas.

Hard working people wish to keep it green.

Kevin Bowie (Concerned citizen)

15530 Comus Rd.

Clarksburg MD. 20871

From: [Tatjana Meerman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:06:42 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Tatjana Meerman
tatmeer@gmail.com
10841 Whiterim Dr.
Potomac, Maryland 20854

From: [Margaret Schoap](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: January 9, 2025 Item 9 Chaberton Solar Sugarloaf - Mandatory Referral Plan - MR2024016
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:30:01 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Chair Artie Harris,

I'm writing to support the planning staff recommendation for denial of the Chaberton Sugarloaf solar project mandatory referral plan.

The staff report clearly lays out that the project does not meet the county's policies that carefully balance solar and farming in the Agricultural Reserve - notably protection of prime soils - a finite resource.

Solar developers are paying up to 20 times what farmers pay to lease land in the Ag Reserve. Solar and farming can coexist but the careful rules set up under ZTA 20-01 that allowed solar in the Reserve must remain in place to avoid locking a new generation of diverse producers out of the only land in the county set aside for farming.

ZTA 20-01 was the result of lengthy stakeholder engagement. Community solar arrays approved under the ZTA are being built on less-than-prime soils, several more approved projects have been paused in line by the grid operator, unable to process more requests at the speed they are coming in. This backlog is slowly clearing and more projects are being proposed under the county conditional use process.

Thank you for upholding the master plan and a commitment to the Ag Reserve with a denial of this proposal - and transmitting this commitment to the PSC as they weigh this proposal and others.

Margaret Schoap
schoapm@aol.com
11425 Neelsville Church Rd
Germantown , Maryland 20876

From: [Ellen Gordon](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Chaberton Sugarloaf Mandatory Referral Hearing
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:36:39 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chair Harris and all Planning Board members:

I endorse the staff recommendation; please deny this application! As a longtime resident of Montgomery County, I find it difficult to understand how the Planning Board could even contemplate recommending approval, in complete violation of an existing County law. This prompted me to spend some time on the Planning Board's website, as well as take a look at its history. The board exists to manage physical growth, plan communities and protect and steward natural, cultural and historical resources. The Board is to work to maintain and improve quality of life in our community, acting upon such issues as growth, transportation, environmental protection, agriculture, historic preservation and forest conservation. Ergo, the Montgomery County Council establishes the laws by which you must abide.

I am mindful of the PSC's authority to approve Chaberton's application for a CPCN and thereby override county law. Indeed, I believe this is an important factor driving Chaberton to try to develop a solar array that violates County law regarding size and soils, for if they are successful, they will have broken the County law, thereby potentially opening the Agricultural Reserve up to any number of oversized solar array applications. By law, the PSC must give due consideration to what the County requests; having anywhere in our county process that suggests that we are amenable to solar arrays on our best ag soils, in contravention of County laws is damaging to County efforts as intervenors to prevent this project.

I also want to ensure you're aware that none of the benefits of Community solar will accrue to down county Montgomery county residents; they will largely be available only outside our county. If this project is built, it will connect to Potomac Edison, which services Frederick County and beyond. The vast majority of Montgomery County residents get their electricity from Pepco—and you can only purchase community solar from your own provider.

In Chaberton's application they state that the land will be offered free to farmers. They also specify that grazers would be required to be certified by the American Solar Grazing Association (ASGA). Yet AGSA clearly specifies on its website that, "Farmers do need to charge a fair rate for bringing sheep to solar sites and meeting the performance guarantees required of the solar industry." Buried on p. 31 of the Chaberton RFP attachment, the consultant specifies that the "site manager will compensate farmer" for vegetation management. Which is it? Will a potential grazer be fairly paid for managing vegetation both on the agriculturally useful portion of the land as well as the remainder? The RFP is incredibly stringent—almost as though it's designed to ensure that no farmer will be interested in pursuing this modest opportunity--even if appropriately compensated.

There's much discussion of modeling the potential success of different types of agriculture under this solar array. But actual agrivoltaics research in the mid-Atlantic is nearly nonexistent. In the US, most existing research has occurred in the arid west, a radically

different environment than ours. There's a significant amount of European research, but again, we don't know how similar results from our region might be. A handful of research projects are underway in MA and NY, more similar to our climate, though I don't know how their soils compare. Without research results from our region's soils, with our region's climates, any modeling is entirely speculative. Yet this project would put at risk the prime use of land in the Agricultural Reserve, i.e., farming. University of Maryland's Extension Service will soon *begin* agrivoltaics research at two MD locations in the near future.

Regarding the vital importance of preserving our best farm soils for farming and putting any solar arrays we do allow on marginal soils; please see American Farmland Trust's "smart solar" policy, <https://farmland.org/solar/> They define smart solar as projects that meet three equally important goals: (1) safeguarding land well-suited for farming and ranching, (2) strengthening farm viability, and (3) accelerating solar energy development. This project fulfills none of those objectives.

The purpose of the Agricultural Reserve is FARMING. The COVID-19 pandemic showed us how precarious our food supply really is—and serves as a foretaste of what our climate-impacted food future may be. Our region supplies less than 5% of the food we eat; everything else travels from hundreds to tens of thousands of miles to reach us, making us vulnerable to far away and more frequent disasters. Growing food locally becomes ever more important. Developing more renewable energy is one facet of addressing climate change; having an adequate food supply is at least as important to surviving and thriving.

Sincerely, Ellen Gordon

Dickerson, MD

301-814-1975

From: [Ellen Gordon](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Automatic reply: Chaberton Sugarloaf Mandatory Referral Hearing
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:37:59 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

My complete mailing address is Ellen Gordon, 17401 Ryefield Ct., Dickerson, MD 20842

On Tue, Jan 7, 2025 at 11:36 AM MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Thank you for contacting the Planning Board Chair's Office. This confirms receipt of your message for distribution to appropriate staff to review. If you have submitted an inquiry, we will respond in a timely manner. You may also leave a voice message at (301) 495-4605 and a staff member will return your call.

If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. If this was not already included, please reply to this email with that information. Written testimony submitted before the deadline of 12pm, two business days before the scheduled Planning Board meeting, will be distributed to the Board and staff and included in the public record. Written testimony received after the deadline will only be distributed to staff to review.

For more information about the Chair's Office, please visit:
<https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/>

From: [Steven Findlay](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Solar facilities on prime farmland in the Ag Reserve--Mandatory Referral No. MR2024016
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:41:02 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

On behalf of the 250 families in the Ag Reserve affiliated with Sugarloaf Citizens Association (SCA), I write to oppose the Chaberton Sugarloaf project (Mandatory Referral No. MR2024016). We concur with the conclusion reached by Planning Commission staff in their Dec. 30, 2024 report—that denial of this project is warranted. We urge the Montgomery County Planning Board to concur with staff's analysis and inform the Public Service Commission (PSC) accordingly. The PSC should reject this proposal.

Further points:

- Montgomery County pioneered a workable and exemplary solar policy for farmland. It was hammered out between stakeholders and government, with broad agreement that preserving prime farmland in the Ag Reserve must be the priority in the context of existing county land-use policies and the county's long-term planning goals (as articulated in staff's report).
- "Agrivoltaics" is a subject worthy of study and experimentation in the mid-Atlantic region. But it is far from clear as of 2025 how and where it will be practical and effective for our region. Thus, it should not be approved for wider commercial use on prime soils at this time.
- If the PSC were to approve this project, a high risk exists of a slippery slope that would supplant active prime farmland with solar arrays due to the high land lease prices solar companies are now willing to pay.
- Climate change considerations are not incidental as the county and PSC evaluate this and other such projects. The mid-Atlantic is likely to become an even more important region for growing food (for both animals and people) over the next two decades.
- Ample open land that is not prime farmland (Class I and II soils) exists in Montgomery County and statewide for the placement of ground-based solar arrays. SCA strongly supports identifying and promoting the placement of solar on such sites.

Sincerely,

Steven Findlay
SCA President
301-908-8659

From: [Steven Findlay](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Automatic reply: Solar facilities on prime farmland in the Ag Reserve--Mandatory Referral No. MR2024016
Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 11:49:41 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

My mailing address is: P.O.Box 450, Barnesville, MD 20838. Tel: 301-908-8659.
Email: stevenfindlay2@gmail.com

Thanks.

On Jan 7, 2025, at 11:41 AM, MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Thank you for contacting the Planning Board Chair's Office. This confirms receipt of your message for distribution to appropriate staff to review. If you have submitted an inquiry, we will respond in a timely manner. You may also leave a voice message at (301) 495-4605 and a staff member will return your call.

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