

**WHEREAS,** on May 25 2023, the County Council of Montgomery County, Maryland, proclaimed June 3 -11, 2023 as Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week in recognition of many of the vital contributions of the Chesapeake Bay to the quality of life of over 18 million people who live in its 64,000 square mile watershed that occupies all of Montgomery County and the District of Columbia, along with most of the state of Maryland, and large portions of the states of Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, who all rely on the watershed's natural resources; and

**WHEREAS,** the Chesapeake Bay watershed, with some of the nation's most productive farm and forest lands, is part of our critical natural infrastructure and provides multiple benefits that include food, clean drinking water, flood mitigation, and increased resilience to the impacts of climate change; and

**WHEREAS,** all 1,500 miles of streams in Montgomery County flow into the Bay via the Potomac, Patuxent, and Anacostia rivers; the Chesapeake Bay's tributary streams in Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve are also an important source of drinking water, which is essential for public health and economic growth and a vital resource in support of sustainable ecosystems for future generations; and

**WHEREAS,** sustainable farming practices are critical in the stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay; 558 farms remain viable in Montgomery County, in the context of high development pressure and cost of living, and 454 farms in Montgomery County produce a wide range of table food crops, meats and other products, allowing County residents to enjoy locally produced food; and

**WHEREAS,** there is a growing demand for local, sustainably produced and culturally appropriate food, and local food systems depend on the availability of skilled local farmers as well as access to local land, and a new generation of farmers is needed to maintain and expand the local food system; aspiring as well as experienced farmers face numerous challenges in obtaining access to farm land, particularly in the growing community of non-white and immigrant farmers; and

**WHEREAS,** local farms supply local food assistance organizations, having sold and donated over 207,000 pounds annually to Manna Food Center's Farm to Food Bank program, which distributes to those in need and benefits local farms through direct purchases and capacity-building grant funds.

**WHEREAS,** the Land Link Program has matched 26 farmers with landowners who provided them access to over 500 acres of farmland, launching new farms that include: AfriThrive, Beauty Blooms Farm, Dodo Farms, Passion to Seed Gardening, and San Giovanni's farm.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the County Council of Montgomery County, Maryland, as part of

### **CHESAPEAKE BAY AWARENESS WEEK**

recognizes and appreciates the extraordinary role of the Montgomery Countryside Alliance Land Link Program in enabling local farmers to strengthen the local food system and be stewards of the Chesapeake Bay.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the County Council recognizes the vital role of farmers in sustaining the Chesapeake Bay and local food systems.

Presented on this 7<sup>th</sup> day of June in the year 2023.



Natali Fani-González  
Councilmember