

Name: **Jared Solomon**
Address: Chevy Chase
What office are you seeking?: House of Delegates - District 18
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: www.SolomonforMD.com

2 Someone new to Montgomery County may ask, "What's the Ag Reserve and why is it important?" What's your answer?

The Ag reserve is 90,000 acres of preserved farm land and open space in the Western area of Montgomery County. The Ag Reserve plays a critical role as the green lungs of the county - helping to filter our air, protect our watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay from pollution, and preserve the history and heritage of Montgomery County and our agricultural traditions. I would also tell them about the sunflower fields and the great walking trails throughout the reserve.

3 What are your priorities regarding stewardship of the County's natural resources (water, forests, open spaces) and parkland?

As a delegate, statewide I think the most pressing environmental issue of our day is climate change. First and foremost, we need to continue to lower our greenhouse gas emissions. Whether from power generation, transportation, or agriculture, I'm confident that we can hit Maryland's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030.

We must increase our investments in and the reliability of public transit and infrastructure not focused on cars. I am also an enthusiastic supporter of increasing our renewable portfolio standards, whether to 50% or 100%. We should push our state investment funds to divest from fossil fuel companies.

Maryland must do better in promoting green infrastructure, particularly in schools, and green procurement. I know the state has investigated the possibility of creating a Green Bank and this is an issue that I hope to push forward. Finally, I will be an ally in improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay and preserving our open spaces.

4 What is your vision for the future of the County's Agricultural Reserve? Briefly, how would you achieve that vision?

Again, this is primarily a county decision but at the state level I would not support any road construction that would break up the Ag Reserve and would be a strong advocate for additional open space preservation throughout the state and our county.

5 Can you identify some of the top challenges to the Reserve's local agriculture and what actions you would take, if elected, to address them?

I think one of the biggest threats to agriculture is the viability of making a living through farming. At the state level, I would like to encourage ways to open up new opportunities and markets for local famers. Two ideas I have is to include a potential fresh fruit and vegetable program with "Meals on Wheels" for seniors and emphasizing local produce purchasing in the procurement process for food for local schools and public agencies. Local purchasing is not only better for the quality of the food and the environment, but will also

support local agriculture. I am also supportive of the Land Links Program. One of the other challenges is the potential for additional development and construction in the Reserve. As I mentioned earlier, I would oppose any action at the state level to do that.

6 What more can be done to support our local farm businesses and rural communities?

As I mentioned in the previous question, I would like to encourage purchasing of locally grown products and am very supportive of the Land Links Program and open space preservation.

7 How should our County manage its solid waste? What role should incineration, composting and recycling play?

Again, this is primarily a county issue, but I believe at the state level we need to be doing everything possible to eliminate or severely reduce the use of incineration and encourage or require the use of recycling and composting. While a zero-waste ecosystem is far off, I believe we should be embracing European models that strongly limit the disposal of solid waste.

8 How can we expand the role the County's schools play in the support of a healthy local food system and the success of local agriculture? Do you support a rural schools' policy that provides equity for Reserve cluster schools acknowledging the unique nature of schools in region set aside for farmland and open space preservation?

Again, this is primarily a county issue, but at the state level beyond what I have mentioned earlier, I would also like there to be an emphasis in schools on healthy eating and teaching children about the critical role played by local farms. Our local ag resources provide an opportunity for hands on learning so kids can understand where our food comes from, the process that goes into creating it, and the importance of fresh produce. On the broader policy side, I believe we need more funding for diverse education programs across the state and we also need to give our districts the ability to tailor those programs to the needs of their communities. The needs of a rural area of MCPS may be different than Wheaton or Chevy Chase.

9 Currently the County is exploring how best to support a strong agricultural economy through agritourism and new farming enterprises such as on farm breweries and wineries. What are your thoughts about how best to advance on farm activities within the context of the master plan?

Again, while I can't comment on the county's master plan I do believe that the state has been doing a good job of promoting our rural communities and I would like to see that continue and even increase. Western Montgomery County and Western Maryland are wonderful destinations that we should be promoting far and wide.

10 What are your regional transportation priorities? Do you support M83 and an additional Potomac bridge and outer beltway through the Reserve or adjacent rural zones?

I do not support the creation of a new highway, bridge crossing, or outer beltway. Instead, we should be investing heavily in public transit - including dedicated funding for Metro, more bus rapid transit, including along and on 270, and increased MARC service. I want to explore creating a commuter tax credit to incentivize the use of transit and other ways to keep the costs down for low income riders.

I would also like to think creatively about ways to improve regional connection by addressing the last mile gap, getting people from transit hubs to the last few miles to work. This could mean more central bus routes to job locations or perhaps tax incentives to employers that run shuttles to and from primary hubs of transit. We also need to do a better job of connecting areas like Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Rockville with Northern Virginia work hubs. Finally, I want to prioritize building more pedestrian and bike friendly infrastructure.