

LOUDOUN COUNTY PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION COALITION

POB 226, ROUND HILL, VA 20142

June 10, 2015

Loudoun Board of Supervisors

Re: Opposition to Certain Proposed Changes in ZOAM 2014-0004 Steep Slope Standards

Dear:

The attached report prepared by the Executive Committee of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition raises our opposition to those changes to the Steep Slopes zoning regulations which open up 470 acres of Very Steep Slopes on 653 properties in Western Loudoun and 235 acres in Eastern Loudoun to potential development.

We support those amendments which simplify and make more efficient the regulatory process including the removal of "man-made" steep slopes from regulation, the addition of Geo-technical studies, and the clarification of agricultural operations.

The Board of Supervisors in considering these changes will be deciding whether Very Steep Slopes are a vital environmental and economic asset to Loudoun as stated in the Revised General Plan or simply engineering challenges to be overcome to accommodate development as the ZOAG proposals imply.

In the report we point out that the ZOAG proposals which we oppose are an inappropriate expansion of the Board's mandate to ZOAG to "make the zoning ordinance more business friendly," as these proposals are about increasing the potential for residential, by-right, development with the associated capital facilities costs and negative property tax implications.

We summarize why Very Steep Slopes are an economic and environmental asset to the public and quote the Revised General Plan language and policies which are clearly violated if the amendments are adopted.

We then set forth our objections to the specific amendments we oppose including:

- Allowing by minor special exception any use permitted in the underlying zoning to be approved in steep slope areas. The Planning Commission and staff also opposes this amendment.
- Allowing by minor special exception the modification of any of the development standards for Very Steep Slopes. The staff also opposes this amendment which should be a matter of referral to the Board of Zoning Adjustment.
- The increase in exempted areas of Very Steep Slopes from 5,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet.
- And certain changes of the development standards which will permit additional development beyond that permitted in the existing regulations.

These changes which increase the development potential on Steep Slopes should be rejected by the Board of Supervisors as they violate the Revised General Plan, have negative economic and environmental impacts, are fiscally negative to the County financial position, and have potentially adverse impacts on the public health, safety and welfare.

Sincerely

Alfred P. Van Huyck, Ed Gorski, Gem Bingol, Emily Southgate, and Bob Shuey