

August 15, 2019



► PO Box K, Bryans Road, MD 20616 ◄
► www.savecharlescounty.com ◄

AMP Creeks Council
Kelly Canavan, *President*

**Audubon Maryland-DC
Important Bird Area Program**
Dave Wilson, *Coordinator*

Chapman Forest Foundation
Bonnie Bick, *President*

Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Erik Fisher, *AICP, Maryland Land
Use Planner*

Clean Water Action
Emily Ranson, *Maryland Program
Coordinator*

Coalition for Smarter Growth
Stewart Schwartz, *Executive Director*

Conservancy for Charles County
Hal Delaplane, *President*

**Conservation Community
Consulting** Jim Rapp, *Principal*

Maryland Bass Nation
Scott Sewell, *Conservation Director*

Maryland Ornithological Society
Kurt R. Schwarz, *Conservation Chair*

Mattawoman Watershed Society
Laurie Snow, *President*

**Nanjemoy-Potomac Environmental
Coalition** Deanna Wheeler, *President*

Nanjemoy Vision, Inc.
Loretta d'Eustachio, *President*

Preservation Maryland
Kimberly Brandt, *Director of
Smart Growth Maryland*

Southern Maryland Audubon Society
Bob Lukinic, *Conservation Chair*

Southern Maryland Sierra Club
Rosa Pinnola Hance, *Chair*

Charles County Planning Commission
200 Baltimore Street
La Plata, MD 20464

Re: Support for Expansion of Zekiah Rural Legacy Area

Dear Planning Commission members,

The Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County is a coalition of more than 20 local, regional, and state organizations working together to promote quality development in areas planned for growth and to protect the county's outstanding environmental assets to preserve and enhance the quality of life enjoyed by residents.

We strongly support expansion of the Zekiah Rural Legacy Area. The existing RLA and the expansion area are rich in natural, agricultural, forestry, scenic, historic, and cultural elements. State funding for the Rural Legacy program has been increasing and we would like to see more of this funding awarded to Charles County for land preservation.

To that end, we also continue to support the creation of a new Nanjemoy-Mattawoman Rural Legacy Area as called for in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan. Much of Western Charles County is located in a Priority Preservation Area and has Tier IV designation on the adopted septic tier map, as is required of Rural Legacy Areas. Depending upon how the boundaries are drawn, the Nanjemoy-Mattawoman Rural Legacy Area could provide property owners within the Watershed Conservation District another program option for land preservation.

Many Maryland counties, including Calvert and St. Mary's, contain more than one Rural Legacy Area. We have been advised by the program staff at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources that the abundance of ecological and working resources in Western Charles County, and the potential to leverage the Navy's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program funding, would make for a very competitive application.

In addition to moving forward with expansion of the Zekiah Rural Legacy Area, we ask that the County move forward with preparing the application for the Nanjemoy-Mattawoman Rural Legacy Area.

Sincerely,
Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County

cc: The Honorable Charles County Commissioners
Christina R. Pompa, Acting Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management