Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: PSB <psmithbell@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Urban Farm Animal Restriction

Please do not agree to restrict farm animals or farming in urban areas. Small farms and family farming is a right. We have the right to feed ourselves.

I lament the lack of GMO free food in our grocery stores and reserve the right to grow my own.

Warmly,

Pamela Smithbell MA LPC NCC SPADA

3540 Putnam Road
Sutton's Bay MI 49682
Cell 231-218-0882

~ so subtle and inviting is the work of science that we become complicit in our own enchainment ~ Foucault
~ so subtle and inviting is the work of science that we become complicit in our own enchantment ~ Pamela
{w/apologies to Foucault }

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jennifer Obney <good_2b_forgiven@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 3:47 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Preserve Michigan's Right to Farm Act

Hello, This is Jennifer Obney, I spoke with you several weeks ago about my situation with my township in regards to our chickens. I have started the process through your department of getting GAAMPs approval. I am writing to you now in regards to the new MDARD proposal which states that "sites that are exclusively zoned for residential use...are not acceptable locations for livestock facilities regardless of the number of livestock. Confining livestock in these locations does not conform to the siting GAAMP." So those with livestock on residential land will no longer be protected by RTFA. I am not able to attend the meeting this Wednesday, so I am sending this email.

This couldn't have come at a worse time for me. When we got our chickens we were not aware that we were in violation of our Twp. ordinances, but as soon as it was brought to my attention I took steps to resolve this issue. First I went to the Twp. meeting and requested a change in their ordinances pertaining specifically to chickens. I explained to them that I knew several people on residential property, with a smaller lot than my own, who were able to have chickens. One of these individuals lives in a neighboring city (in which they do not even have a chicken ordinance), and the other lives in a very high populated city (with no acreage anywhere)! I was completely blown away when my own Twp. required 10+ acres to have CHICKENS! I also went on to explain that we are trying to teach our children to be as self sufficient as possible and providing our own eggs has been wonderful. It has also been a great learning experience for them and we raised our birds from hatchlings, they are extremely friendly, and are like pets. It's been a great blessing to my church family as well, as I have several loyal customers purchasing eggs from me. Our birds have never been a nuisance, they are totally confined to our property, and we've never received any complaints from neighbors. We have actually shared our eggs with neighbors. I have been patiently waiting since last summer to hear any information regarding our request for ordinance change from the Twp. and I have gotten nothing until a month ago. I received a certified letter stating that we were still in violation and needed to take care of it immediately! With no explanation as to what was taking place with our request for ordinance change. It was shortly after this that I was informed about the RTFA and this is where the process began with you. Now we have this new proposal that is going to cause even more problems for those of us with small farms, who are residential. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs. Changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or environment; there has been no evidence to show that small farms in residential areas are a threat to the public health or environment. The proposed changes also create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). The Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do not have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change is attempting to do.

The bottom line is, there is a growing power struggle between the citizens and those in authority over us. We are losing more of our freedoms as individuals who are just trying to provide for our families. In these economic times, this is a very crucial part of our livelihood. More and more people are attempting to provide for their own families, whether it be a large farm to provide meat, milk, or crops or a small farm to provide some vegetables and eggs. We have the right to provide for our families as long as it isn't a threat to our health or the environment.

Thank You,
Jennifer Obney
Grand Blanc, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Tracee Horn <tmhorn@chartermi.net>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 3:37 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

I DO NOT support the revisions being made to the Right to farm act!

Tracee Horn

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: I _ <lndrsn@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 3:36 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices

Hello,
I writing to make known; my adamant disapproval of proposed changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs).

My comment is in reference to GAAMP Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities, I oppose the inclusion of Category 4 sites because...(These localized regulations should be left to city zoning ordinances and not state governance, lot size and livestock size are not taken into account on the state level where they are on the city level, etc.)

This change appears to give favor to big commercial agricultural operators, while harming small farms and individuals who could benefit from greater independence and control of their food supply.

Thank you
Lynda Anderson

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Tammy Wills <upluge@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 3:34 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

Dear Ms. Bolton,

I am writing on behalf of small farmers in Michigan. I am not in favor of the proposed changes that would bring every farm, even with just one animal, under the scrutiny of GAAMPS Site Selection. Under the proposed laws, I fear for the future of the back yard chicken farmer and the owners of small hobby farms. Michigan residents should have their right to farm protected. Sustainable living, a localized connection to our food source and environmentally friendly practices must be a part of Michigan's plan for the future.

Sincerely,

Ms. Tammy Wills
1104 Adams St.
Marquette, MI 49855

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Melissa Arab <tajasiberians@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:06 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Regarding the proposed changes to the Right to Farm Act

I am writing to you to object to the current proposition to amend the Right to Farm Act to the complete exclusion of farms in residential zones. This affects me and many others who I know on a very personal level.

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.
2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

- **My 2 acre property and the properties of many other farmers were overtaken by rezoning from Agricultural to Residential due to suburban sprawl. While new neighborhoods grow up and around existing fazrms, there is no proof that these neighborhoods are in any way endangered by the existance of the farms. My own property was inspected and found to be in compliance with GAAMPs and in no way a risk to the environment or to my neighbors. I am currently able to continue selling my natural, organic eggs from cage free hens to locals who appreciate a healthier and more natural diet. The proposed changes under the Michigan Right to Farm Act would remove protection from my farm solely due to the location, as it is now zoned Residential.**

3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

- **The Michigan Right to Farm Act was specificially amended to override all local zoning ordinances that would interfere with a farm's ability to operate. Zoning ordinances are specifically pre-empted by the MRTFA. Amending the act to remove protection from certain local zones goes against the vert Act itself.**

Please consider the long term ramifications of preventing small farms from growing natural, healthy food and relying solely on large, for-profit enterprises to keep everyone fed. Michigan has the best farm protection act in the country. Self-reliance is something to be encouraged, not repressed. The more resources we have as a state, the wealthier we will be, in all ways. Farmers are one of our states greatest resources. Commerical businesses are behind the push to eliminate local farmers to improve their own profits.

When the last small farmer is pushed out by rezoning, and the last tree is cut down for a new neighborhood and the last fish eaten and the last stream poisoned, you will realize then that you can't eat money and you will be forced to subsist on whatever mystery swill out of state for-profit enterprises choose to feed you.

Melissa

--
Keep your words soft and sweet. You never know when you will have to eat them... or who will be feeding them to you.

Taja Siberian Huskies
Http://www.TajaSiberians.net

You can also find Taja Siberians on facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/siberianhuskypuppiesinmichigan

Taja's Vanilla Moon Graphic Design and Photo Editing
http://www.TajasVanillaMoon.com

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Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Sarah Drumm <drummwalsh@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:05 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Support for residential farming/gardening

I want to express my support for allowing people in residential neighborhoods to keep chickens, goats or any other animals which are not a nuisance to neighbors. I live in an older neighborhood in downtown Kalamazoo. Our houses are very close together. Several of our neighbors and community gardens keep chickens and bees and some are considering a goat. I work hard to grow a few vegetables for our family and for canning.

This ability to save money and to know where your food is grown/cultivated is important to my family and me. My children know where eggs come from as well as their meat. We only buy meat from people we know. They eat very healthy and are always excited to try food they have grown or helped to harvest.

Some of the proposed changes to the GAAMP may compromise the rights of those who want to keep 1 or 2 chickens for eggs for their families. Please consider the very small farmer. I want my neighbors to have this right.

--
Sarah Drumm
drummagency.com
269.598.8870
Facilitation Training
Grant-Writing
Community-Building
Non-Profit Support

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: wendy@cybersol.com
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 3:21 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: animals in residential areas

I am writing in response to an article I saw regarding change in legislation about farm animals in residential areas. I am not familiar with much law or how things like this work. I am familiar with farm animals, though however. I grew up with horses. I was in 4-H for 10 years and was also in FFA and Ag Ed. I now manage a 40-horse farm in Bangor.

Many people enjoy a few chickens or goats for fresh eggs or milk in their backyard. These people have regular jobs in the community and have no intent of becoming farmers. They also often have no means to purchase a large piece of land out in the country. These people are trying to stick close to nature and be more self-sufficient.

Please consider this before you make any changes that would affect these people in a negative way.

Wendy Fisher

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Preferred Landscapes <kimberly@preferredlandscapes.net>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 3:13 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs

all citizens in Michigan should have a right to participate in the production of their own food, wherever they live. Taking away our right to produce our own food is taking away our right to be responsible for our own health.

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Kimberly Taylor
Preferred Landscapes, Inc.
Phone: 248.684.0707
E-mail: kimberly@preferredlandscapes.net

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jennifer Yanover <jdyanover@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 12:00 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Comments regarding right to farm act

I am a suburban gardener who is informed about Michigan's Right to Farm Act. I am very opposed to the changes in GAAMPs. I'm not aware of the source of the inspiration for this change, but can only imagine it is highly political, as local townships (like my own in West Bloomfield) keep asserting their uninformed opinions and try to undermine the Right to Farm Act itself. As I keep explaining to any official that will listen, state law trumps local ordinances.

According to the law changes should be based on SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE. What new evidence support the current change to the site selection GAAMP?

According to the law, changes in the GAAMO should be for the purposes of improved public health or environment. Residential zoned areas are not a threat to public health, nor the environment. In fact, if you look around other urban areas, you'll note that more and more small farms are growing their own food. If a person who lives in a residential area wishes to raise chickens, for example, they are subject to inspections to ensure that the site is clean and well maintained.

The Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMOs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law. Only legislators can do that!!

It is time for Michigan's agricultural committees to stop overstepping the boundries of the law. This will clearly have a huge fight if you decide to move forward. Food rights are a big topic right now and our citizens are dissatisfied with the state's hired hands overstepping the limits of their jobs to politically influence our lives.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Yanover
5400 Sunnycrest Drive
West Bloomfield, MI 48323

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: karol <theback9farm@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 3:04 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: small farm issue please take to meeting tonight!~

I just wanted to state that I have been a 4-H leader in vanburen county for 14 years. I am very worried about what the state is thinking of doing.
If the state allows the local governments to rule on whether a person can small farm or hobby farm, that will allow them to make a decision based on the opinions of a 4-5 membership board. I know they are saying that 4-H animals are different but some of these animals are more than just a few months some animals you can show for years!
In Antwerp were I live, they have changed my land 3 times in less than 20 years. I moved to this area so that I had land and could put some animals on it if I wanted too. The animal waste worries and noise issues are silly. If a person doesn't like that kind of sound or smell, why choose to move in an area where you can be subjected to them?
I truly hope that the state will really think long and hard about this issue.
Kids who have animals are hard working and responsible, I have seen it first hand.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Betty <bakhanbetty@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:56 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Farming

What are we coming to does the farming community complain about the kid noise and the trafic more people bring why does someone have more rites to move in by someone that has animals then they complain and the small farmer gets shut out ive got over 50 assorted ducks and geese and love them all so if someone moved in on me then told me they would have to go well there would be a lawsuit or the cops called so much they would know my voice. Its crazy dosnt anyone see it the farmer is what gives them the food they are just people that are so stuck in thier perfect world they cant see the forest for the trees. Its crazy we need to stop the bull 5 acres is enough for a small farm

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy™ S II 4G

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Matthew Keating <mkeating1@wccnet.edu>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:56 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Comment: Residential Farming

My name is Matthew J. Keating, registered to vote in 48103 Ann Arbor, Mi and I am commenting on the proposal to take away farming rights in residential areas. I am against this proposal and I believe it would be a detriment to our society and food system. Our farmers and public need as much help as possible in these times and being able to self support ones self with the basic means of survival by growing or raising livestock for food is an unalienable right all human deserve.

Matthew J. Keating

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Karen Kmieciak <kmieciakfamily@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 2:39 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Public Comment for Proposed 2014 GAAMPs

I am writing as a Michigan resident who has no stake in farming other than to provide my family with good food and good health.

I live in a small city at a great distance to most farms. My access to fresh, local food comes from my weekly farmers market as well as other area farmers markets.

Food safety is important to me. Local business is important to me. Being able to purchase wholesome food grown using methods I prefer should be a possibility for ALL Michigan residents. Being able to speak to the farmer is a value that cannot be put into numbers.

There is a great movement of people who are taking their food safety into their own hands and growing for themselves. This should be admired and encouraged.

Please reconsider your recommendations that would put small farms out of business and/or practice.

To this "ordinary citizen" it would appear that you are paving way to give a great advantage to large corporation farms.

Do not treat small farms like large corporate farms. Small farms are not a nuisance to society like large corporation farms are.

Small farms were once a part of the great foundation of this country. It would be shameful to put more impediments in the small farmer's way.

Kindly,

Karen Kmieciak
Farmington, Michigan

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Tanya Andrews <tanjaandrews@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 2:39 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP proposed changes

As the proud owner of four backyard chickens that have enriched my family's life considerably, the proposed changes to Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices are troubling. Urban agriculture has helped us reconnect with the land in a small but beneficial way. It has helped my daughter see where her food comes from & has been a great learning experience not only for her, but for everyone who comes to our home.
My neighbors have no complaints & enjoy seeing the chickens & asking about them. Please don't make it harder to do things like this! We should be removing barriers to self-sufficiency, not erecting them.

Sincerely,

Tanya Andrews
5 N. Summit St. #2
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

734.834.2992

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jesse Tack <jessedavidtack@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:48 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan's Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices (GAAMPs)

Hello, I am writing as a concerned citizen. I believe that we need to legislate homeowners and their livestock less, not more. People have lived with livestock since we left the trees and became civilized. Livestock act as garbage disposals (kitchen wastes/scraps), food source, and health care providers (nutrient and minerals).

It is very concerning that we as a society continue to create barriers to citizens right to pursuit of happiness and liberty. People's rights should be upheld for all but the most dangerous actions, and living in health with livestock is not one of them. In fact, as a small amount of research shows, corporate ag. and confinement farming are BY FAR more dangerous pursuits, than individuals tending a small flock, hive, etc. Yet we allow leach fields, loss of topsoil, and animal cruelty routinely.

Please do not add the "Category 4 Sites" to the existing GAAMP's. This only hurts liberty. People should be rewarded for taking more responsibility in how they feed themselves, not further legislated. The time for rebellion is near, with economic stagnation, energy peaks, and the 1% getting richer by the day, the People are rumbling, it is your responsibility to listen.

Thank you for your time,

--
Jesse D. Tack
MT-BC

Founder, Whole Culture Repair LLC
http://wholeculturerepair.wordpress.com/

Co-founder, Abundant Michigan Permaculture Ypsilanti
http://abundantmichigan.wordpress.com/

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: A. Topping <amandatop73@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 1:45 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: regarding GAAMPs

Hello,
I am writing to urge you to please continue to allow small livestock in areas that are zoned 'residential'. Our family lives in the city of Ypsilanti. In 2009, after much debate in our town, there was an ordinance enacted that allows for a single residence to keep four hens (no roosters). We've been keeping hens since that time. That same year, my husband was laid off and our family met financial hardships just as so many Michigan families have over the past 5 years. Our hens have kept our family of 5, plus one more, as my mother lives with my husband, children and myself, in stock of eggs- and even meat, as the birds aged-out and became stew-pot chickens.
We have never, ever had any complaints from neighbors about our birds. We keep the chicken's living area quite clean, and we bury their waste in soil to be used later as compost for our garden (which also gives us a lot of food for our family the year through).

Being allowed to have hens, which in turn gives us eggs and meat, as well as nourishes the garden that also feeds our family, has only had a positive impact on our family, and our neighbors (who benefit from our extra eggs and veggies). Not only are our children learning how to care for these animals, they also see where their food comes from, from bird to garden. And financially, the "Ladies" as we call them, have helped us survive these years of economic woes.

I implore you to NOT make it harder to live in this state by taking away such a simple blessing.

Sincerely,
Amanda Topping
Ypsilanti, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: GEORGE GIROD <ggirod@wildblue.net>
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 2:09 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

I am writing to protest planned changes in the GAAMPS and the resulting outlawing of livestock in residential areas. As justification, I can go all the way back to WWII when producing healthful food was critical to the nation. We could readily find it critical again, as global warming destroys farm land to our south.

GAAMPS assure that the people operate in a way that does not interfere with neighbors and operations do not threaten health. No scientific evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection.
GAAMPs.

So, please reconsider outlawing harmless operations that help feed the people healthful food while providing activities for children and adolescents who benefit and learn from the work.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: jnbukowski@aol.com
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 11:45 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Preserve MI right to Farm

Preserve Michigan's right to farm.

The most important story to tell is yours. **Let MDARD and the Commissioners know why it is important to you** that all citizens in Michigan have a right to participate in the production of their own food, wherever they live.

According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Jean Wagner
590 Hemingway
Lk. Orion, MI 48362

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Caitlin Koppelman <ck2.2009@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:31 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP RE: Site selection

To Whom It May Concern:

Please recommend, on behalf of MI residents, that the changes to the GAAMP for Site Selections are NOT adopted. These changes may appear harmless on the surface, but the changes made now pave the way for further infringement on the rights of land owners. The impact of 50 animals is exponentially greater than the impact of 1 animal, or even 50 chickens vs. a back-yard flock of 6. The "ripple effect" of these changes will have an adverse affect on local economy, small farmers, and even programs such a 4-H. As a landowner, i do not believe the state of MI has any right to tell me what i can or cannot do with my acerage. As a law-abiding citizen, I should be able to participate in whatever hobby I may choose (ie: raising rabbits for 4-H) and get my eggs/produce/meat from wherever i choose to give my patronage (ie: my own back-yard hen house). If the State begins to make these kinds of changes, what is up the road for future regulations? Farming, now. What about hunting? Gardening?

It seems clear that these changes are proposed because of a few "squeaky-wheel" situations. Michigan residents *should* be held to a standard so their neighbors rights to a quiet, smell-free yard, are not infringed upon, but please do not make decision for all of us based on time input of a few poor neighbors.

Do not adopt the changes to the GAAMP on Site Selection.

Sincerely,

Caitlin A. Koppelman
Resident, Parma, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mindie Vanboxel <mindiemom@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:27 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan right to farm

It is vital that the Michigan right to farm act remain intact, with full integrity.
It is the right of every individual to be able to sustain their families needs on their own property.
We are losing freedoms day after day in this country. If a person doesn't want to live by someone farming, they should not move next to a farmer, plain and simple. It is not within their rights, nor should it be, to change things just because they don't like something.
The government needs to BACK OFF of citizens that are doing nothing but feeding their families and supporting them legally and in a respectable way. Worry about meth labs and drug lords and people actually hurting others, and leave those of us that love farming alone.
Mindie VanBoxel
231-923-8366

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jamie Berlin <jberlinn@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:26 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act - Please allow backyard Bees and chickens to continue to be protected by Right to Farm Act

As a citizen of Michigan, I urge you to continue to allow backyard Bees and chickens to be protected under the Right to Farm act. The state will benefit from a proliferation of backyard honeybees, who are valuable pollinators, at a time when pollinator populations have seen serious decline. Allowing RTFA to protect small holdings is actually a boon to commercial populations, as small holdings tend to be healthier stock.

Thank you,
Jamie Berlin
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

Sent from my iPhone

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Luisa Scavo <luisascavo@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:19 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Regarding proposed changes to GAAMPs

Hello, I am a young resident of Michigan; I was born here, raised here, and I intend to stay here. I am, however, extremely troubled by the news of possible changes to GAAMPs that would outlaw animals such as chickens in residentially zoned areas. I feel so silenced. I feel as if my dreams are being swept up from under me. I think of the great-grandmothers who would have starved if not for their backyard chicken enterprises during the Great Depression, turning feed and a few birds into money and food for themselves and their neighbors. I think of the communities that form around the centers of residential farms, especially urban and suburban farming ventures, where one not only inspires another on a path of self-sufficiency, but on a path of bonds to be strengthened, exchanges to be made, neighbors to be neighbors. Residential farms offer Michiganians a chance to take the economy into their own hands, enriching their lives and the lives of others. Part of this is monetary, yes, but the joy of watching something grow, finding true purpose, and providing the food that feeds to oneself and one's community... that is priceless, and that is what inspired my significant other and I to start our residentially based microgreen business. Animals usually relegated to the faraway farm are not yet a part of our journey, but I am very much looking forward to the day that they will be.

Regards,
Luisa Scavo

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Catherine Ferman <cmaferman@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:19 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Cc: cmaferman@att.net
Subject: Do not remove the protection that the Right to Farm Act gives us against local restrictions

Hello,
The environment (and the public) have suffered from legislation restricting individual's rights to procur and create healthy and local food products. GMO's have been introduced into our food source and we do not have the right to be informed so that we can make a decision regarding purchasing. The free market economy does not work when the public is denied the right of information about the products being sold.

The only way to protect ourselves, our children and our community from hazardous decisions made by large corporations is to have the right to produce our own food in our own communities. Altering the Right to Farm Act in any way that diminishes our ability to fight local zoning laws that lean toward development and commercialization of property, denies us one more tool toward keeping our kids and community healthy. Our ancestors understood the necessity and economy of raising a few chickens for eggs and meat, for having bee hives for honey, for raising sheep for wool. Removing the protection that the RFA gives us would diminish all of us and lead us down the path of dependancy on corporate interests that do not have our interests in mind.

I am attaching a few advertisements which illustrate that only time can tell that previous governmental and medical decisions were wrong after all.
Cathie Ferman
248-474-8878

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mike Baird <auchmedden@wowway.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:15 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Urban/Suburban Farms

Sirs,

I'm not real sure of the actual details of the law as it is now written or of any proposed changes with regards to allowing "farm" animals, in any number, within existing residential neighborhoods. All I know is that I moved to a residential area in a small rural village I found attractive to myself and seemingly to others. When I bought my property no one, even though this is an agricultural area, in my neighborhood had any "farm" animals in residence. At this time there are still no "farm" animals in anyone's backyard. I really do not like the thought that someday my neighbor or the guy three doors down might like to raise a few chickens or pigs in his yard. Residential areas should be residential. So whatever loopholes need to be closed in the current law in order to achieve that goal, please close those loopholes.

Thank You,
Mike Baird
Dansville, Michigan

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Laura Burns <lkropscott@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:10 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: PROTECT small farmers rights

Please PROTECT small farmers rights- not strip them of all rights. It is very important that we maintain, support and protect our small farms. They are our food source and an important part of our Michigan Economy,. I fully agree with Mayor Phil Campbells quote:

"Instead of isolating agricultural activity, we need to further imbed it into our communities. Rather than further regulating small farms, we need to lift the tangled web of agricultural regulation so that a truly local food market can emerge. Production, processing, transportation and sales should be less regulated, allowing small farms freedom to compete with huge agribusinesses." Howell Mayor Phil Campbell

Laura Burns
Grand Haven, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: littlejudyd@gmail.com on behalf of judy durfy <littlejudy@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:09 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: My comments on the 2014 drafts of the state's GAAMPs

I have invested in acreage in Michigan (Sharon Township) to use for retirement income via small scale beekeeping and farm operations on that particular property.

I have also invested thousands of dollars in beekeeping equipment and have contract with two small scale farms to provide pollination services. These farms are surrounded by residential areas.

The proposed changes bring operations as small as a single animal under the control of the Site Selection GAAMPs, and then use the new Category 4 definition to exclude those operations from RTF protection in residential areas.

It also would allow Sharon Township to decide if ANY farm activities or beekeeping could be allowed on the agricultural property I have invested in and am paying taxes on.

And, the proposed changes jeopardize the operations at the two small scale organic farms that I currently have perpetual pollination contracts with in Ann Arbor and Monroe.

I made the decision years ago to invest my hard earned dollars in these agricultural activities because the fair farming act protected my activities on these properties.

Now that several new subdivisions have broken ground in the area of my agricultural property, my retirement income will be in jeopardy, as is my investment in beekeeping equipment and livestock, if the fair farming act is changed as proposed

My retirement plans for staying in Michigan have been jeopardized by the proposed changes to the fair farming act.

If the fair farming regulations are changed as proposed, I will surely lose all of my investment in Michigan and I will NOT be residing in Michigan after retirement as several other states offer a safe and secure environment for small scales and hobby farmers.

Judith Durfy
23203 Brentwood Drive
Brownstown Twp., MI 48183
734 671-1208

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Emily Springfield <espringf@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:08 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Please don't apply GAAMPs to one chicken

I'm writing to weigh in on the following proposed changes to the Generally Acceptable Agricultural Practices:

* I support the distinction between "livestock facilities" and "livestock production facilities." There is a big difference between raising a few cattle and running an intensive feeding operation for 1000 cattle.

* I believe small livestock, such as a small number of rabbits, poultry, and possibly goats, should be allowed even in residential areas, even in cities on small lots.

* I am especially concerned about the lack of clarity with the sentence "Category 4 Sites are sites that are exclusively zoned for residential use and are not acceptable locations for livestock facilities regardless of number." **Are rural residential sites considered "exclusively residential"?** I live on 12 acres with good setbacks in a rural residential area and there is no reason I should not be allowed to keep half a dozen chickens.

* Therefore, I believe "livestock facility" should be redefined to allow a small number of small livestock - certainly up to 5 poultry birds or rabbits, and possibly also including up to 2 goats.

As the economic situation in the US remains uncertain, many people are turning to home food production as a means of supporting their families. I have taught hundreds of workshops to people looking to do just that. We would be crippling home food production - specifically home protein production, which is critical to human health and very expensive to purchase from sustainable sources - if we prohibit small livestock in all residential areas.

Sincerely,
Emily Springfield
Preserving Traditions
http://preservingtraditions.org/

--
Emily Springfield
Chelsea, Michigan

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Eric Robertson <ericwaynerobertson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:05 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed changes to GAAMPs Site Selection for Livestock Production Facilities

Hello,

I would like to state my opposition to the proposed changes. Access to fresh, organic, locally grown or raised farm products has become increasingly rare in recent decades. It is extremely important for health to have access to nutritious whole foods and towards that end we depend on our local farmers. The proposed measures could needlessly affect the farmers that we depend on for this food in ways that cause them to be forced to scale back operations, relocate or go out of business.

We should instead look into ways that we can provide an environment where local farmers can thrive so that as many as possible have access to their products. Food deserts are a serious and real problem in Michigan, and this contributes to the obesity and health epidemic that we are currently facing as a region, state and nation.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Paul <paul.rootstofruits@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:04 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs and the economic future of Michigan

To whom it may concern,

Greetings. My name is Paul Angelini, and I am a native Michigander. Having just learned about the proposed changes to GAAMP, I am in a state of shock. As I consider the implications of these proposed modifications to GAAMP, I begin to wonder how long it will be before the negative impact is realized on the state level. Michigan has always had a strong backbone of agriculture, particularly on the small scale of family farms and backyard livestock. We see before us now a promising economic trend toward all things Michigan-made. Everything from local honey, to jams, produce, and animal products such as the ubiquitous egg. This pattern of growth we see unfolding before us shows a promise of great returns for Michigan's economy, stimulating the both on the community and State level. By enacting these propositions, the future of Michigan's State and rural economy will decline as a direct consequence of small-farmers being forced to cease and desist. We as Michigan residents have the liberty to raise small-scale livestock as countless Michiganders did before us. In order for GAAMP to be in harmony with the growing number of Michigan small-famers, the people, and not the State need to regain our sovereignty of decision-making.

As the square, level, and plumb and other working tools are made use of by the operative builder to erect an edifice with masterful care and construction, so too ought our State government strive to do the same for it's residents. As each brick is carefully and purposefully layed for the structure of the building, the builder knows that fruits of their labors will outlive them, and as such dedicates their buildings for the greater good of their fellow man. In a like manner, the actions of Michigan's State government ought to forever be in harmony with the will of it's power base (people), so that build together. Bureaucracy has it's place, however when we allow for laws, rules, and regulations to be made without the will and consent of the people, it will always fail. We the people are Michigan's government. You are the elected officials. Together, let us create a better Michigan. Please do not allow for the proposed changes for GAAMP to be enacted. The future of every Michigan resident is at stake.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Regards,

Paul Angelini

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Chris Hinkley <cahinkley@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:59 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPS Changes

Environmental Stewardship Division,

I am strongly opposed to the proposed changes to the Generally Accepted Agricultural Practices with the addition of Category 4. These changes will limit the ability of citizens of the State of Michigan to exercise rights to use of their own property. Further, it will prevent residents from having the ability to provide for themselves. Though property rights, people should be able to use their property to provide food for their own family or generate income as they see fit. Our government should not be in the position of forcing families to purchase food at a store when they can produce it on their own.

I earnestly request that no changes are made that interfere with any property owners rights to make use of their property to support themselves and their families.

Thank you,

Chris Hinkley

314 E. Lexington St.

Davison, MI 48423

810-653-2052

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Burgess,Scott <scott.burgess@motortrend.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:57 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: save the Michigan Right to Farm Act

Hello,

Please do everything you can to preserve the Michigan Right to Farm Act. I found the idea of changing or repealing the act extremely disappointing and unfair. Small farmers, hobby farmers and anyone else who is using their land should have the right to do so. There are already many laws in place to limit how many animals they have and what they are doing, getting rid of the Right to Farm Act would only empower encroaching suburbs and local governments to rid the area of a people they have decided should not use their land as they see fit.

Also, by attacking small farmers, I find this behavior unacceptable. They are the salt of the Earth and the kind of people Michigan needs more of not less.

Thank you,

Scott Burgess
Detroit Editor
Motor Trend
O: 248-594-2538
C: 248-345-6626
@autocritic<https://twitter.com/AutoCritic>

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: John Canzano <JCanzano@MichWorkLaw.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:55 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

I am writing to oppose the proposed changes to the GAAMPs as ill-advised and likely unlawful. I live in Detroit, and one of the bright spots in Detroit is the many small urban farms and gardens which have turned what others considered to be a wasteland of abandonment and vacant land into productive and vital parts of the city. I know of a number of these urban farms where beekeepers are keeping bees, and because of this, urban beekeepers helped to maintain and increase the population of honeybees. As is now common knowledge, honeybees as pollinators are vital to our food supply and the bees are declining in numbers everywhere due to complex reasons. However, most of the beekeepers and bees in the cities are thriving! There are no pesticides and the bees do very well in the "urban prairie" of wildflowers (weeds) on all the vacant land and on the urban farms. Also many of these small urban farms and gardens may have a few chickens or other small farm animals, besides bees.

What you are proposing threatens to put urban farming and urban beekeeping out of business. That is exactly the opposite of what the Right to Farm Act intends. Among other things:

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

I urge you to reject the proposed changes. They would be extremely harmful and are not needed at all. Your agency has better things to do.

John R. Canzano
McKnight, McClow, Canzano, Smith & Radtke, P.C.
400 Galleria Officentre, #117
Southfield, MI 48034
(248) 354-9650
(248) 354-9656 (fax)
Email: jcanzano@michworklaw.com

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Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Matthew Forster <mforster721@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:53 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Cc: My Jenny
Subject: Proposed changes to Michigan's Right To Farm Act.

To whom it may concern.

I am writing in response to the proposed changes to Michigan's Right To Farm Act. These proposed changes will severely hurt the many rural and urban farmers that depend on the protection of the right to Farm Act in order to provide food, income and recreation for their family's and Thor communities. I agree that there needs for some regulation in regards to small farms, such as manure management, the animal care and the number of farm animals that one is allowed to have on their property; and that should based on the amount of land and needs of the animals kept on the farm. But by regulating that number as few as one farm animal; will not only mean the end of urban farming but it could be the end of programs such as the 4H Youth Development Program; Because urban farming is a huge part of that organization and the kids will not be able to raise the animals that are shown and auctioned off at the county fairs. Over the years my family has kept chickens, rabbits, horses and even a cow or two on a 9 acre farm on what is considered a residential plot of land and never received one complaint from any of the neighbors. That farm is no longer in my family but it's still an operational farm and we still get eggs and other farm products from the current owners. That farm is still without any complaints. Please consider the impact that these proposed changed will have on the Citizens of the State of Michigan and protect their rights by not take them away. I agree that the right to farm act need fixing but it needs to be done in a manner that will still protect our rights as small, rule and urban farmers.

Sincerely,

Matthew Forster
43606 Burtrig Rd.
Belleville, MI 48111

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Michael Aliano <michael_aliano@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:51 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed changes to the GAAMPs

The proposed changes to the GAAMPs for Site Selection and Odor Control for Livestock Production Facilities would effectively shutdown all small farming, or at least allow such mandates be ordered at the whim of each township zoning board. Anyone owning 40 acres or less could easily have their zoning changed from agricultural to residential against their wishes; effectively shutting down any level of farming or livestock raising regardless of the size/scope of the operation. This proposed change takes away the freedom of chosing to grow your own food and gives that power over to local zoning boards at best or corporate farms at worst. Such changes make everyone more dependant on corporate farms or worse, the goverment.

Michael Aliano
Metamora, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Aaron <xxtarinxx@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:51 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan Right To Farm

It is imperative that Michigan families have the right to produce their own food on their own property. The changes being proposed to this are detrimental to many Michigan families. The intended benefit is less of a benefit than the damage it would cause so many people in this already economically depressed state. Unlike most rhetorical labels the government designates, Farm Freedom is what this is all about... the freedom to farm! The obligation of governmental agencies is to protect freedom and to encourage production from citizens... people contributing to their communities, counties, and states, NOT to hamper peoples efforts to lawfully provide for their family. The proposed changes here are oppressive, unjust, and have no place on the table. There are laws that enslave people, and laws that set them free. Make the right choice. That is, after all, what we have a government for.... to protect our rights, not diminish them.

Sincerely,
Aaron Gluchowski

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: rickandmarilyn glowacki <rick_marilyn@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:44 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: please don't change the meaning of the law

According to the law,changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.
The law says, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.
So proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.
for God sake don't change the meaning of the law. thank you
Marilyn Glowacki at: rick_marilyn@yahoo.com

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Michael & April Williamson <michaelaprilw@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:37 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

Hi, I am a Cheboygan, MI resident. I believe everyone has the right to produce their own food and sell a little to get by, no matter the size of their property or the zone it falls in. This is the intent of the RTFA, and the proposed changes to the GAMPs attempt to undermine this principal right granted under this law. This is not only an overreach of authority, it is also shameful and underhanded. Our small farmers, producers, and enterprising homesteaders should be protected and encouraged to make local food available, not given challenging restrictions to make their jobs harder.

Sincerely,
April Williamson
11636 Bonnett Rd
Levering, MI 49755

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Wade Wachs <wadelovesrachel@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:34 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs changes for livestock production

I am writing to you to express my concern over the changing definition of "Livestock Production Facilities". As a supporter of small farms and an individual that is wary of Big Agriculture taking away my rights to produce food for my family, I urge you to allow small farms to continue to be able to keep small amounts of livestock even in Residential areas.

Thank you.

-Wade-

--
Wade Wachs
801.341.WADE

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Lee Holdridge <leeholdridge@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:33 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act (RTFA)

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mannino <mannino@charter.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:33 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAMMPS

To whom it may concern,

I am against the proposed changes to the GAMMPS regarding the MDARD defining a new term, Livestock Facility, as "one with any number of animals - including a single animal."

We the people and citizens of Michigan should not be prevented from growing our own food or raising small animals (such as chickens, turkeys, goats, sheep, rabbits, etc.) to feed us and our families. There was a time when self sufficiency was promoted by our government. This change in Agricultural law will make people more dependent on government and move citizens further away from taking care of themselves and their land.

Furthermore, I do not support the new class of sites called "Category 4 sites" that are not ever acceptable for livestock facilities.

Please leave the zoning laws up to the townships and municipalities that are within the boundaries of Michigan and stop controlling local government.

We the people know what is best for ourselves and our families regarding putting fresh food on our tables via growing gardens and raising small livestock, a simple inalienable right as Americans.

Concerned about our future,
Jennifer Mannino
Ortonville, Michigan

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Andrea Calvert <calverta@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:28 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Farming

People should be able to farm on their own land - our food supply is so contaminated that, good for them if they can produce their own food. I fear the food suppliers that poison us daily are the ones that win by closing this loophole. Please don't.

There was a time when the idea of stopping someone from farming on their own land would've been ludicrous.

Andrea Calvert
8186 Loon Lane
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

Sent from my iPhone

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Andorfer, Bob (MDA) on behalf of MDA-Info
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:55 AM
To: Whitman, Wayne (MDA); Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: FW: Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development Feedback Form (ContentID - 85723)

Wayne/Rhonda:

The following message came in to the MDA-Info mailbox.

Bob Andorfer

-----Original Message-----
From: DoNotReply@michigan.gov [mailto:DoNotReply@michigan.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:13 PM
To: MDA-Info
Subject: Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development Feedback Form (ContentID - 85723)

name:
phone:
email:
subjecttype: General Question
message: I am writing you urging you to vote against any laws or ordinance that would restrict livestock from anyone in the state of Michigan. In this economy citizens of this state need to be allowed to do what they need to survive as best they can and this will only hurt families, and could not possibly help. Please do what is right.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Marcie Timmins <sticksnstonez@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:15 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

Marcie Timmins

4261 Bartlett Rd.

Williamsburg, Mi.

49690

January 22, 2014

GAAMP Public Imput session

To Whom it may concern;

I am writing to you to express my dismay at the thought of changing Michigan's Right to Farm Act. I live in a rural community that has many areas zoned residential, but have plenty of room to raise farm animals. By encompassing even the ownership of one farm animal to fall under the proposed GAAMP changes it would disallow many in my community from being able to continue with their current life style choice and would be a hard ship to many Northern Michigan Families who raise their own food to help offset the cost of living up here. As a member of Acme Township's planning commission, I can say that as a whole our planning commission supports our agricultural lifestyle and is in the process of creating form based codes that will allow people more property rights not less. I would hope that the State would support property rights in the same way and allow those with the passion to farm the right to do so regardless of where they live or what ordinances their township or county may have in place at the moment. As one who is familiar with the system I understand that it takes time to make policy changes and if you shift the Right to Farm act even communities that support it will have to go back and change their ordinances leaving law abiding citizens in a gray zone for an undetermined amount of time.

Sincerely,

Marcie Timmins

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jim Arkison <rolferjim@joimail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:24 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPs

In response to the proposed GAAMP changes which I have read, this is one of those situations where the fix creates a bigger problem. Right now, the current law keeps a sanity line that keeps to a minimum a lot of litigation. It is an established rule that has created a balance point.

The new changes appear to want to address a problem area. I understand that concept, but it is dangerous to try to tweak the laws too finely. A lot of potential manipulation is opened up with a boatload of unintended consequences.

Anytime people live in close proximity, there will be issues. It is a challenge to get along. Creating a system that can be manipulated in a small locale puts people moving into an area at a disadvantage. Right now, there are a lot of people that move into areas that aren't aware of the GAAMPs, but because they are sanely written, a lot of potential problems are avoided. These changes would disrupt that balance.

There are always people looking for the opportunity to abuse power. These proposed changes open Pandora's Box.

Thank you for your time.

Jim Arkison

p.s. Please do not add my email to any list.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Linda Russell <lmr71157@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:11 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm

As a nation we have become to dependant upon corporations for so many of our needs. I believe that an individual has the right to be self sustaining.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Carole D <dunfactor2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:55 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan Right to Farm protection

I am writing in to oppose the removal of the protection provided by the Right To Farm Act to farmers and hobbyists living in residential areas. I strongly disagree with the changes and removal of rights to keep livestock and to farm. Please vote no on the proposed changes.

Carole Darby
South Lyon, MI 48178

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: jason nielsen <farmlandforestry@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:19 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm act and residential zoning.

Hello,

My name is Jason Nielsen. I am a technical service provider for NRCS and a small farmer in Michigan's thumb. Through my work with Michigan NRCS and Conservation Districts I am very familiar with the rules of MDARD GAAMPs and I am in agreement that there should be guidelines to help farmers of all sizes to make a living by producing an agricultural commodity without compromising their neighbor's rights or environmental quality. I currently serve on the planning commission for the township I live in so I do have an idea of how zoning works and I understand the reasons for giving an area a certain zoning designation. I am also a proponent of local food and the right for people to participate in growing their own food. It has come to my attention that MDARD wants to apply siting GAAMPs guidelines to the smallest of commercial farms and to those who choose to grow food for their own consumption on their own land.

All legal issues aside, I present the following argument and solution:

Lumping all land that is zoned residential into a group is misleading. There are areas that are obviously residential where the landscape is completely developed. Then there are areas that have been zoned residential with very few people living there and the landscape is prime for agriculture. There are many thousands acres of land bordering our towns and suburbs and even in our countryside that are zoned residential without a dwelling near them.

I think a better solution to this situation is for a urban or residential animal production GAAMPs to be developed and implemented so that people can grow their own food with RTF protection. Even a very small commercial farm could operate with RTF protection on residentially zoned land as long as GAAMPs are met. There will always be those who abuse any set of rules but let's not rule out a greater majority of people who just want the freedom to raise a few animals without compromising neighbor relations or environmental quality. There could be lot size restrictions, animal unit per acre restrictions, rules for noise, odor, manure handling, pest management, etc. to address the concerns of detractors.

Give the people a set of rules to follow, let them follow their ambitions and raise their animals. I see no harm in a backyard pen of properly managed and cared for chickens or rabbits. There will be those who complain, but the majority will agree that small scale residential farming can be a good thing. Let's not abandon the cart because of a few squeaky wheels. Let's create a compromise that everyone can agree on and move forward.

If a group of people truly don't want animals where they live, let them decide locally. A township or other municipality can always decide locally if they want their neighbors raising small scale livestock. If there isn't an ordinance against it, and people are following state animal welfare, neighbor relations, and environmental guidelines I don't see a reason to deny our fellow citizens that given right. I don't believe it would be beneficial to anyone if Michigan is known as the state that does not protect this kind of agriculture.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jason Nielsen
Farmland Forestry and Environmental.
810.265.4803

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Deborah Thompson <portonovo.thompson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:17 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

Hello,

I am writing to express my support for the Right to Farm. One of the most productive and positive movements currently is the farming movement in Detroit. As a resident, I have seen many vacant lots transformed into beautiful small farms. These farms serve the community in several ways: 1). They provide a source of healthy food 2) They engage the entire community in a positive community building activity 3) They beautify otherwise ugly and desolate spaces 3) They teach young people about the land and the environment.

Deborah Thompson
1356 Joliet Place
Detroit, Mi 48207

Sent from my iPad

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: nikitajade@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:11 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: The Michigan Right to Farm Act / GAAMP Proposed Changes

To: The Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Re: The Michigan Right to Farm Act / GAAMP Proposed Changes

Dear Sirs / Madams --

I am writing in regard to The Michigan Right to Farm Act / GAAMP Proposed Changes that would strip small farmers in Michigan of certain protections against nuisance complaints from residential neighbors. I strongly oppose the removal of these protections. Such protections keep local communities from favoring larger commercial / developmental interests over small farmers. At a time when communities need to look to a variety of places to raise revenue, I fear that such interests could cause local municipalities to push small farms out of the area in order to develop land for residential and commercial purposes.

I am concerned about the impact this might have on even smaller urban farmers. In the last couple of years, parts of Lansing (particularly on the east and south sides) have been transformed by urban farmers. Abandoned lots have been repurposed so that small amounts of crops such as corn, potatoes, lettuce, herbs (and a variety of other plants) can be grown. This not only leads to more available, healthy food in the city, but also gives residents an opportunity to interact with their neighbors and better their neighborhoods. I would hate to see protections taken away that would make this sort of thing more difficult for city residents.

It is my hope that the commission rejects these proposed changes, and keeps the protections for small farms in place.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

Sincerely,
Kristen Heine

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Leeann Drees <leeann.drees@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:00 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Protect the Right to Farm - No "Livestock Facilities," Please!

Please consider small farmers' rights and livelihoods when deliberating over the proposed GAAMP changes this year. Urban and even suburban livestock are a meaningful part of a local food movement that has helped revitalize neighborhoods (particularly in Detroit), and been successful in everything from providing folks with healthy, local food to keeping youth productively engaged in agriculture. To eliminate this would be short-sighted, foolish, and ultimately detrimental to Michigan's progress.

Thank you,
Leeann Drees
Detroit

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: ryan patterson <ryhurricane1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:58 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Please dont change the farm act

Dont change the farm act... good real food is good for us not the crap they force down r throats... real food for real people!!!

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: lettucegrow@juno.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:54 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

Dear sir,
I write to you in regards to the proposed changes MDARD is pushing to limit farming of any size in residential-zoned places.

While I understand the thoughts of maintaining public health and safety, and the possibility of nuisance smells and noises, this is not the method to address such issues.
There are health and safety rules in affect which can be used to help animals and people live hygienically without banning all farming practices. Enforce them.
Banning people from raising a few chickens in their own backyards is archaic. Michigan living is about self-sufficiency, pride in our work, doing what we feel is right for our families- not about regulations and limitations on things already decided.
In addition, these changes are not within the jurisdiction of MDARD to make. To allow it would set precedent for more regulations down the road.
Please disallow these and future changes of this manner.
Thank you for your time.

Christie Clark
Ottawa Lake, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: rileybostons@comcast.net
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 8:41 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: residents right to farm

concerning gaamps, our household is holding great value to homesteading our property for food. we grow a garden and raise chickens for eggs. we then bless many others in our community with the surplus that is grown. this is a right that our family does not intend to lose. this way of control is jealous and wrong and is unconstitutional! much of the property has acreage around our home and everyone lives this way because its a way of life that we cherish. it is excellent for our family who suffers from food allergies. my family can eat our home grown food without a problem. also God put man on earth to govern it and we are living by His direction. our chickens are happily living eating what God intended them to eat and are not stacked in cages! do not go further with attempting to taking this right to farm from people. sincerely Rebecca Riley

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mike Pressler <mikerobe67909@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 8:23 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: No changes to Right To Farm

With increasing concerns with food safety I feel it is my right to provide food for my family by utilizing my private property. I am a so called "hobby" farmer who raises poultry for meat and eggs. I have 2 acres in Homer Township and feel like changes to this law would ban me from farming. Therefore I do not support changes to this law.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Pressler

Sent from my iPad

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: T.D. <dilutequarterhorses@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:35 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: MI Right to Farm Act

I am strongly opposed to changes in the MI Right To Farm Act that would disallow the raising of livestock in residential areas. People in Michigan should be free to raise livestock to provide healthy food for their families rather then need to depend on antibiotic filled, preservative filled commercial sources. To take this right away from MI farmers and hobby farmers would be a massive setback to our freedoms. Please oppose the proposed changes to the MI Right To Farm Act.

Tracy Darby
South Lyon, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mary G <levtahor@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 6:27 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Do not pass these regulations

As a Michigan Citizen, I was troubled to find out that it is being determined by the MSFC whether the ownership of one farm animal should be regulated to the same degree as those that own fifty animals or more. These are tiny family farms, not thriving businesses. It would be an unnecessary economic burden upon Michigan citizens in this already economically hard time to add more regulations and fees to their lives.
I am also distressed that some citizens who have chosen to live out of town might be deprived of even the right to own farm animals entirely. This is an encroachment on freedom.
Do not pass these regulations. We are better off to encourage neighborly respect in our communities than to impose more rules.

--
Mary K Gray

Horton, MI

he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Ps 23:3

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mark Ludwig <mark.ludwig@macd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:59 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: New GAAMPs

I find myself conflicted about the revision to GAAMPs to eliminate RTF protection to smaller farms in conflict with local zoning. I have been involved with RTF complaints and the MAEAP program since I hired on with the Allegan Conservation District in 2008. I also sit on my township planning commission and know the RTF law has been used well beyond what was originally intended. I correspond with several folks trying to help Detroit get off it's knees with urban agriculture ventures which are truly inspiring, MADARD has MAEAP verified some farms in these urban settings . It seems to me that the GAAMPs committee has punted away the urban ag issue rather than directly address this exciting phenomena with a set of urban/residential oriented GAAMPs. For better or worse there is a lot of enthusiasm about the potential for urban agriculture and it seems unwise for MDARD to simply disengage from this movement in spite of the messy nature of sorting agriculture issues in non traditional settings. I frankly wonder about the future of my little farm, while I'm currently in an area zoned rural residential and am presumably still solidly protected by RTF, I'm well under 50 AUs. Will farmers like myself have to defend our interests at local planing commissions if a capricious band of officials wanted to change the zoning in my area to force me out of business? Unlikely in my case, but not something unfathomable in a slightly different context. Is the intent of the new GAAMPs to cut loose all farms under 50 AUs, even those who might be encroached on by creeping development? Seems like protecting farms from such encroachment was part of the original intent of the RTF law! I also wonder about horse facilities near developed neighborhoods, are these to be driven out of those areas? I also can't help but wonder if we are shutting down a path young folks may take into agriculture if we over regulate small animal keeping such as sheep, goats and chickens in non traditional settings. I have been asking for some years when MDARD would address these issues, at this point I can't say I believe this to be the best approach to this matter. I commend you all for at least trying to address these sticky issues, but suggest it may be wise to revisit these issues and develop GAAMPs for appropriate farm practices in non traditional areas rather that the current approach. Thanks for reading, hope you are getting constructive feedback from others.
MPL

Mark P. Ludwig
Allegan Conservation District
mark.ludwig@macd.org
http://www.alleganc d.org/
Projects:
Macatawa Watershed - Targeting Critical Agricultural Areas With Best Management Practices
http://www.the-macc.org/watershed/agriculture/
616-240-7135 cell preferred
616-395-2688 MACC office

The Flushing Bar Project - Protecting Wildlife from Forage Mowers
http://www.theflushingbarproject.net/

You Tube Channel
https://www.youtube.com/user/SaveGrasslandBirds?feature=mhee

Let's try it! How will we know unless we do?

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Leslie Goch <dlacacres@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:56 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMPS Comments

I and my family are NOT in favor of the proposed changes. While it appears to be only for people in urban and suburban areas, the definition of what amount of land would be affected would eliminate small farmers.

Leslie Goch

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jones, Donna <DJones@zebra.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 12:55 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP changes

To whom it may concern,

I believe that the proposed changes in the document referenced below will allow the potential risk of exploitation by those who do not have livestock or who do not have any intention of ever raising food of any sort on their own land. The laws and policies regarding livestock should side with individuals who choose to live off of their land, be it residential or agricultural, not with those who try to take away that ability. It is their land, and they should be allowed to use it to live, as they see fit.

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdard/2014_DRAFT_SITE_SELECTION_GAAMP_443917_7.pdf

I am personally urging you to NOT make the proposed changes in the PDF referenced above. While I can see the need to restrict the number or possibly the type of livestock animals allowed in some urban areas so that people do not make it impossible for their neighbors to live comfortably, we should not be interfering with the God-given right of people to support themselves on their land.

Thank you.

Donna Jones
Mikado, Michigan

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Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Paul Webb <PWebb@latitudesubro.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:15 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm protection

There are some things I like our government to be involved in and there are other things were they need to mind their own business. This is one of them. If somebody wants to have a little farm with chickens and other animals that can provide fresh, organic meat or dairy and they are in a so called city then for God's sake leave them alone and let them have their little farm. Call me with any questions. Thank you. Paul

Paul Webb, CSRP
Vice President, Client Services
Latitude Subrogation Services
1760 S. Telegraph Road, Suite 104
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

Phone: 1-877-454-3400 x2260
Direct Line: 1-248-365-0070
Fax: 1-877-454-3405
E-Mail: pwebb@latitudesubro.com

Please visit us on the web at www.latitudesubro.com or watch our informational video here

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Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Alice Bagley <alice.bagley@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:15 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Public Comment on GAAMP changes

I am writing in opposition to changes that would outlaw livestock in residential areas. There is no reason that a reasonable number of small livestock such as chickens, ducks, turkeys, rabbits, or small goats should be any more incompatible with a clean and comfortable neighborhood. Given the correct amount of space and care these animals are no more disruptive to residential life than dogs or cats. I hope that you will reconsider the ban and choose a more moderate action.

Thank you
Alice Bagley

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Gina Rubenstein <ginarubenstein@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:14 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: GAAMP

PLEASE protect the Michigan Right to Farm Act from changes that will affect the little guy. Please allow us to continue to have small family hobby farms, chicken coops or a goat or three without being over regulated by the government. .

I want the right to feed my family food that I know the origins of. I want the right to Farm on the small scale protected. I want the right to strive to be self sufficient.

Thank you for listening.

Gina Rubenstein

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Joseph Scanlan <joseph.scanlan@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:08 AM
To: MDA-Ag-Commission; hansfarm@up.net; jalapeno@cybersol.com; vvp@casair.net; bkennedy@abgco.net; Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Comment regarding proposed changes to Site Selection GAAMPs

Commissioners:

Without actually amending the RTFA, amending or changing site selection GAAMPs (any GAAMP, really) are moot. Without legislative action, the intent of the RTFA will remain the same, despite MDARD changing or amending voluntary guidance practices such as GAAMPs.

As a professional community planner and being personally involved with local food policy regulations and planning here in the Upper Peninsula, I understand the increasing pressure from communities throughout the state for MDARD to clarify RTFA protection in urban areas under 100,000 in population and residential zones. But the proposed language submitted by your commission to amend the site selection GAAMPs is insufficient and allows for much uncertainty and perhaps even greater confusion without amending the actual RTFA.

I suggest you abandoned these proposed changes to the site selection GAAMPs.

Sincerely,

Joseph P. Scanlan
358 Genesee Street
Marquette, Michigan 49855

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Paul Masson <pmmasson@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:44 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Protect small farms; don't change the RTFL

MDARD,
This law has been effective, and does not need to be changed.
The landowner has rights superior to his neighbors rights.

Paul Masson

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Maxwell Wolf <maxjwolf@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:42 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Public comment on changes To GAAMPs

I'm writing to oppose the proposed changes to site selection GAAMPs. It's of great concern to me that urban sprawl could be allowed to wipe out small farms across Michigan simply by rezoning the land to residential and banning all farming operations. This goes against the spirit of the Right to Farm Act. Furthermore:

1. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

2. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

3. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do not have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Thank you,
Maxwell Wolf
858 Centre Street
Traverse City, MI 49686

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jim Kacanowski <kacanowski@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:49 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Site Selection GAAMPs

I do not support bringing operations as small as a single animal under the control of the Site Selection GAAMPs. While I understand the need for restrictions in residential neighborhoods with small lots, I believe that any lot over 2 acres has the right to be self sufficient, including the right to raise small animals.

Our citizens should have the right to move more toward localization and away from Globalization. This should include small scale farming, small animals, and renewable energy sources. Our government should be supportive of this strategy and do all it can to protect existing rights.

Jim Kacanowski
Clarkston, MI
248-895-6599

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Holton, Jennifer (MDA)
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:40 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: FW: Public Input

From: julieopper.jo [mailto:julieopper.jo@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:36 PM
To: Holton, Jennifer (MDA)
Subject: Public Input

I do NOT support the changes being considered! This would be a detriment to the small farmers in Michigan. - Julie Opper
Kenockee Twp, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mollie Donner <mfdonner@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:38 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan's Right to Farm Act

Hello Ms. Wilcox,

My family and I would like to extend to you our concerns with some of the alterations being proposed by the 2014 Drafts. Many of the farming families in Michigan are like mine. We are not rich but we enjoy self sustaining crop growth, a milk producing goat or cow in our barn, a pig or two to raise and slaughter for food, some chickens and a turkey or two at times for eggs and food. Managing these things is more to us than just saving a trip to the market or grocery store. We use family agriculture as a way of life. We connect raising live animals, feeding them caring for them, keeping them healthy for our consumption as a way to teach our children compassion for living things as well as the value of life. It matters and resonates more taking a life that you have raised to feed your family then it ever could if you were just seeing frozen chicken pieces in a plastic bag. Through hobby farming our family has finally been able to get out of debt and we no longer feel strained make the choice to pay house payments or feed our children. Furthermore, the raising of small numbers of livestock in an area where we can be close to public places around our home has allowed us to live close to work, school, libraries, and banks while still having the ability of living sustained by our own hands. This last fact matters the very most to our family. Self sustaining agriculture is a way of life for our family and countless other families in both the Northern and Southern regions of Michigan. Reducing a decision of where we can and cannot have our family live, based on a choice to live by growing our own food and meat, to a local matter is a mistake. Taking away our rights of protection given to us in the Right To Farm Act provided by state law will not only reduce local farming, deter future farm development, and possibly have a major effect on the fauna of Michigan but it also sends a message to every farmer large and small that we are not welcome or needed here in Michigan. Setting such strict laws for small farms will smother farming in Michigan and will increase poverty levels.

Please, Madam, reconsider regulating hobby and small farms so severely. Many of us Michiganders lively hood depends on it.

Regards,

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Dante <dantestella@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:18 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Public input / agricultural management practices

To whom it may concern:

I am in favor of closing the right-to-farm loopholes currently asserted in urban areas (particularly back yard and "hobby" farms) and putting the relevant questions to local zoning boards.

Whether or not to allow urban agriculture hinges on very localized facts (i.e., block-to-block) and what is proposed in terms of the activities. Neighbors should have a say in this and not be subjected to someone else's non-residential activities - particularly involving animals - without a right to be heard.

To that end, I support the proposed changes to exclude areas exclusively zoned residential from right-to-farm protections.

Regards,
Dante Stella

1300 E Lafayette St
Apt 2412
Detroit, MI 48207-2924

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jessica Steller <stellerapiaries@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:31 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Protect GAAMPs and my right to farm!

I am a small scale beekeeper in Jackson and I strongly urge you to reconsider your stance on altering the MDA's GAAMPS because small time farmers need protection to pursue farming that is not solely for the purpose of commercial, mass agriculture. My husband and I own one of Michigan's largest alternative beekeeping businesses and we simply would not exist if it weren't for the RTFA. Without it we surely would have left the state and taken our business and services elsewhere. Please do not make a decision that will force me to regret staying in my home state. These laws and guidelines cannot exclusively help the "big guys" you need to do more to listen to and act upon the wishes of the majority of your constituents. I urge you again to reconsider the following facts and let it help you make the right choice for michigan.

The most important story According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment; no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment.

The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

Best regards,
Jessica Steller
Steller apiaries

Sent from my iPhone

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: j spaulding <landscape.resource@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:31 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: your constituency supports the RIGHT TO FARM!

Dear MDARD.

If we want true food security — defined as the ability of a country, region, state or community to be as self-sufficient in food production as possible — then we need a legal system that supports local, small-scale food production.

Farms that fit this bill turn out healthful food, guard against shortages, stabilize local economies and instill community camaraderie.

Michigan is ahead of the curve when it comes to setting up legal protections for small-scale farmers, and the state's Right to Farm laws are making a real difference.

Do NOT drop the animal units down to 0 in the definition of a Livestock Production Facility. This will create undue burdens on small farmers.

Do NOT gut the Right to Farm Act by giving local zoning ordinances the power to control where farming can happen. This change would violate the language and intent of the Right to Farm Act.

The Michigan RTFA is a template for the defense and encouragement of local food production and the restoration of agriculture to its rightful place — integrated into communities.

Respectfully,

--
Jayson Spaulding
Cardinal Earth Landscapes
10841 Fowler Rd.
Honor, MI 49640
231.883.7887

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Kirk Green <wkgreen1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:38 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Site Selection GAAMPS / Food sovereignty

Good afternoon,

I'm reaching out today to voice my concern over the new proposal for the Site Selection GAAMPS. I do not believe that we should restrict an individual's right to having a few chickens or goats, or other small number of livestock, to help feed and support their families. Besides the fact that animals have been raised in urban settings for ages -- people need access to food -- there is a desire for folks to have connection with their food, and a desire to have access to healthy, well-raised food -- not the food that comes out of factory farm operations.

Please consider both urban livestock, and also small farms, and be considerate of how we can be supportive of raising food in a way that does not require large doses of antibiotics, or raising animals in conditions that would disgust most people, and is the real contributor of pollution in our livestock production. Please go after the operations that are the big time polluters, instead of focusing energies on over-regulating a person's food sovereignty.

Thank you for your time.

Peas & Quiet,
W Kirk Green
5473 Okemos Rd
East Lansing, MI 48823

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Kim Reminder <kymdenise@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:50 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm

My family of seven is blessed with just under seven acres. We have a huge garden, 11 laying hens, a diva of a rooster, and a couple very pampered angora rabbits. We would be considered a suburban area, just outside of Spring Lake, in Nunica. Our eggs feed our family, our bunnies provide wool that I can spin and knit for family or sale. Please keep us protected. We have a clean home, and a clean hobby farm, and it helps us meet our basic needs when groceries are so expensive. We buy chickens from another small family farm that are gmo and hormone free. They are affordable, and we are families supporting families. The thought of having these basic rights stripped away when we all work so hard to take the best care of our animals within clearly defined guidelines for housing and care.. it's terrifying.

"You only have seven acres.. you are not far enough away from the mobile home park we just built on the property you couldn't afford to buy yourself. NO CHICKENS FOR YOU!"

How could this happen? Please help us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

The Reminder Family

Nunica, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Barbara Michael <michael.barbara.102@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:29 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Small farmers

Please do not just bow down to large corporate farmers. Please listen to those serving their communities with small farms. If you want to plan successfully for the future, you will sustain small farms!

Thank you for being responsible.
Barbara Michael

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Constance Gardner <micalcmaster@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:22 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: milive article

http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/01/hold_manure_pile_tweak_suggest.htm

I just finished reading this article. I can't believe what I am reading., I have owned my 10 acres since 1978. When I first purchased it the zoning was agricultural/residential. Then sometime in the last 20 years the zoning changed to residential...no more agricultural.This seemed unnecessary since my township (Inland) does not even have a village or town to speak of, a large percentage of the township is State land. The remaining land is agricultual based or small subdivisions.
During tthe years since 1978 I have had numerous animals on my property. Horses and chickens regurlary in residence. I also have a one acre garden with numerous fruit trees. During this time I was a teacher for 30 years. My farming activities were for my personal use and pleasure. This article suggests that this would be taken away from me simply because the property I bought so many years ago has now become residential. My small 10 acre parcel is in no way a threat to the agricultural community in which I live here in Northwestern Michigan (Benzie county). I am well aware that the primary business within my county is agriculture followed by tourism.

I would highly suggest that those in charge think carefully about the wording of such a change that would effect so many individuals who practice agriculture on a small scale for their own personal use and pleasure.

Constance Gardner

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Gayle Loesel <mrswizawati@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:21 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan Right to Farm Act

To Whom It May Concern:

It is important to me that all citizens in Michigan have a right to participate in the production of their own food, wherever they live. I currently produce vegetables in 5 raised beds, which provide me with a variety of fresh produce in lieu of buying food which is not fresh, has been preserved with a coating, or sprayed with pesticides. Likewise, I enjoy eggs from local farms which keep chickens, and would like to raise my own; however I currently live in a township which forbids such activity.

I wish to add my voice to those who are in favor of allowing small farms to continue providing both protein in the form of fresh meat and eggs from animals kept as organically and humanely as possible. I believe all citizens in Michigan have a right to participate in the production of their own food, wherever they live.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Gayle Loesel
Saginaw, MI

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Christine Bowles <christine@consultbluewater.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:19 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Farm protection

Please do Not change the current Michigan law, we do not need to close the loop hole....

"Removing Michigan Right to Farm protection from suburban, hobby farms 'closes a loophole,' "

Thank you,
Christine Bowles

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Rebecca Penney <penney.r@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:12 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: opposition to proposed changes to Michigan's Farm Act

Please reconsider the proposed changes to the Right to Farm Act, as it allows for and protects the rights of small local farms to provide their families and communities with local, sustainable/healthy food options & creates sustainability in food systems. Subjecting community farms to local zoning ordinances will severely limit or preclude farming activities in local areas, which is exactly what the Michigan Right to Farm Act set out to avoid.
Local farm markets and our local economies will be negatively affected.

Please protect the Michigan Right to Farm act, so that small farms can rely on it knowing that they can carry out farming activities responsibly in the State of Michigan.

Thanks for your consideration,
Rebecca Penney

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Justin Lee <justinlee3@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:08 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to Farm Act

Do not change the Right to Farm Act! We need all farms big and small. You should know this already!

Sent from my iPhone

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: tropology@gmail.com on behalf of Michael Maranda <mm@michaelmaranda.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 1:02 PM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: No ban on residential chickens

The proposed ban on keeping chicken in residential areas is an unnecessary intrusion into the local and household economies.

I'd like to see the opposite of this ban -- perhaps a law preventing any such ban and only allowing regulation for the humane treatment of these animals, and setting reasonable limits on what restrictions can be put in place. Further: I'd like to see a requirement for the humane keeping of all chickens in this state as Poultry and Eggs are presently produced in unhealthy and inhumane manner via secretive factory farming practices. We need openness on that front not restrictions on residential homesteading. By unhealthy I mean both for the chickens, for our environment, and potentially for those who consume their product. How many on the committee have visited a factory farm? How many on the committee have compared the product of free range and otherwise happy chickens with that produced in factory farm conditions? This is a matter of ethics, a matter of taste preferences, a matter of health and nutrition, and deeper still a matter of economic freedom.

Regards,

Michael Maranda
a concerned citizen in Michigan

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: gathomps7@att.net
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:03 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: please no change to GAAMP

""In the proposed changes, MDARD defines a new term, Livestock Facility, as one with any number of animals - including a single animal," a step, the alert warns, that "for the first time brings small farm operations under the control of the Site Selection GAAMPs. And then in a second step, MDARD creates a new class of sites - Category 4 sites - that are not ever acceptable sites for Livestock Facilities."
Category 4 sites are defined as those exclusively zoned for residential use."

As a suburbanite in the Detroit area in these changing times, I would ask that nothing be changed in Michigan law making it more difficult for urban and suburban citizens to raise farm animals on a small scale. I know of at least 6 families that raise chickens, for example, in several west side cities and Detroit and have never heard of their neighbors complaining. In Detroit, urban agriculture could be a piece of everyone's goal of improved conditions--it does not need any further hindrance!

Please, please, do not let the state define any areas as off limits to small farm animals!

Sincerely,
Virginia Thompson
Redford

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Jean Cavanaugh <messageboxforjean@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:59 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan Right to Farm Act

Greetings,

I'm writing regarding the proposed change to the Michigan Right to Farm Act. Food for all should always be a right and in order for that to occur everyone should be free to farm as long as they're doing it humanely and without harm to the environment. Right now as we face multiple threats from all sides including climate change, colony collapse disorder, economic pressures, loss of topsoil, etc... we need all growers from large to small to be able to contribute. Let's keep the Michigan Right to Farm Act intact without changing the meaning of the law. There is no evidence that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,
Jean Cavanaugh
Belleville, MI 48111

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Megan Urquhart <urquhart.megan@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:58 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Damn right, it's ludicrous!

Small farms are the only way many people are able to get by these days.. Additional unnecessary regulation is definitely the wrong way to help our economy. Keep Michigan's Right to Farm Act protected.

--
Je suis incognito ici faites le savoir.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Marissa Luna <mluna2074@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:54 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: MDARD Michigan Right to Farm Act public comment

To the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD):

The move by MDARD to make it so those with livestock on land exclusively zoned for residential use will no longer be protected by RTFA is unjustifiable. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be based on scientific evidence; no evidence has been provided that supports the current changes to the Site Selection GAAMPs. According to the law, changes to the GAAMPs should be for purposes of improved public health or the environment yet no evidence has been provided that small farms in residentially zoned areas are a threat to public health or the environment. Small farms are nothing compared to the environmental and public health threats posed by large scale, commercial farms and CAFOs. The proposed changes create language in the GAAMPs that contradicts the language of the law (that is, the GAAMPs require zoning to regulate Livestock Facilities while the Law prohibits zoning from regulating them). While the Agriculture Commission has the authority to change the language of the GAAMPs, they do NOT have the authority to change the meaning of the law, and that is what this change attempts to do.

In the words of attorney Michelle Halley, who successfully represented FTCLDF members Randy and Libby Buchler in a right-to-farm case one year ago, "The agency can't rewrite the law. They have only the authority to carry it out as the legislature intended. If they're going beyond that, they're violating the separation of powers. Period."

Every citizen has the right to farm and raise their own livestock on their own land. You are attempting to take away individual rights to raise our own food and we will not stand for it.

--
Marissa E. Luna
Comparative Cultures and Politics, BA
Michigan State University 2012

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Donny Comer <comerdon@msu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:53 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Changes in GAAMPs

Dear MDA,

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed change in GAAMPs you are considering. I am a researcher at Michigan State University for sustainable agriculture and very involved in the local food movement. I am also involved in community and neighborhood development projects and member of a very diverse social and economic neighborhood.

Our current agricultural system, based on large farms and high use of fossil foils is a dangerous and unsustainable system. In recent years some progress has been made through research and movements that have shown the benefits of small scale local food systems. They not only produce healthier food with less of an environmental footprint, but they build community and increase food security as well. I am reading all the time about new developments across the country where farms are being reintegrated back into our communities and the benefits that come about from these actions.

The changes in the GAAMP's make a statement that Michigan is not on board with this progress. In stead of suggesting that residential lands are not acceptable for livestock facilities, we should be protecting those that want to be responsible enough to raise their own food. Putting in contingencies similar to Lansing's current code: maximum of five hens, no roosters, 10 feet from the property line, 40 feet from adjacent buildings without written permission; would allow people to produce their own food while not infringing on the rights of their neighbors.

We should also be making movements to integrate small farms into our communities. The changes that further restrict new small farms near residential areas are a step backwards in achieving this goal.

There are many people in my department, and in my neighborhood that strongly agree with what I am writing. I hope you take this into consideration and rethink your changes to the GAAMPs.

Thank you,

Don Comer

Research Assistant
Plant, Soil, and Microbial Sciences
Michigan State University

Founder and Executive Director
The GROW Initiative
www.growinitiative.org
517.648.8222

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: tomtom biggles <thegoodlifevisual@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:53 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Keep Right to Farm Act as is!

This Act needs to stay as it is. The people should have the right to Urban farms, mane would not be able to survive and feed their kids and communities without things that they can provide. Thank you.

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: True Lies <lucidtruth@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:48 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed changes in the GAAMPs

Hello,

I am against the changes to the GAAMPs as I feel this is just another attempt to squash out free market competition by smaller scale farms. I have enjoyed purchasing locally grown products from the various farmers markets through out the area and this will have a negative impact on these farmers. Please reconsider these changes.

Thank You

Steven Burke

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: True Lies <lucidtruth@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:47 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Proposed changes in the GAAMPs

Hello,

I am against the changes to the GAAMPs as I feel this is just another attempt to squash out free market competition by smaller scale farms. I have enjoyed purchasing locally grown products from the various farmers markets through out the area and this will have a negative impact on these farmers. Please reconsider these changes.

Thank You

Steven Burke

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: J. Parker Penney <parkerpenney@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:38 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Removing Michigan's Right to Farm protections

Please reconsider the proposed changes to the Right to Farm Act, as it allows for and protects the rights of small local farms to provide their families and communities with local, sustainable/healthy food options & creates sustainability in food systems. Subjecting community farms to local zoning ordinances will severely limit or preclude farming activities in local areas, which is exactly what the Michigan Right to Farm Act set out to avoid.

Please protect the Michigan Right to Farm act, so that small farms can rely on it knowing that they can carry out farming activities responsibly in the State of Michigan.

Thanks for your consideration,
Parker Penney

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Colleen Nelson <nelsonslittlepygs@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:37 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan Right to Farm Act

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Our family farm is located in Newaygo County in the Township of Wilcox. Currently, we are zoned Residential, but live in a very RURAL and Agricultural based Township. This proposal should NOT be based solely on Zoning, as our nearest neighbor is a Quarter of a Mile Away from our livestock. Our families farm has been owned by a member of our family for almost 80 years. The majority of that time, some sort of livestock have been raised here. Zoning has been changed in the last few years from Residential - Agricultural to now just Residential. Our farm is nearly 40 acres, with 25 animals currently. The majority of our farm is NOT used for the housing of livestock, around 10 acres is what our animals are housed on which is in eye sight of our house. We CAN NOT see any of the neighboring homes from our house and where our livestock is housed. We feel that this change is trying to change the meaning of the law, and we feel you do not have that authority.

Our children are involved in our counties 4H program, belonging currently to 2 different clubs. We also are members of the National Pygmy Goat Association. We also breed and sell Silkie Chickens and Lionhead Rabbits so that our children can learn how to budget for feed and veterinary bills for the animals that they want to show at the Fair. The confidence that owning and showing our livestock has brought to our children is something that most "Residential Zoned" children don't experience! Our daughter is Mentally & Physically Challenged and our animals have been a huge part of her therapy. Brushing, petting & feeding the animals allows her to be "normal" and do things that other children her age can do without thought. PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THIS AWAY FROM HER!

Our Children are very proud to be the 4th Generation to raise & sell livestock from our farm. Our kids understand more about life than most "city aka Residential zoned" kids will ever know! They have assisted in kiddings of the goat kids, helped bottle feed them, clean stalls, feed animals multiple times a day, and PLAY with animals on a daily basis. The joy that our livestock brings our children is something that most "city aka Residential zoned" kids aren't exposed to.

PLEASE DO NOT PASS THE GAAMP as written! PLEASE Research to see WHERE these farms are located! RESIDENTIAL DOESN'T MEAN NEIGHBORS THAT ARE CLOSE! RESIDENTIAL doesn't mean SMALL tracks of land.....RESIDENTIAL doesn't mean that Public Safety is in jeopardy!

RESEARCH before passing this!

Thank you for your time,

Colleen Nelson

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Mick Watson <watsonmh@frontiernet.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:36 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm law

I oppose any changes to the RTF until such a time that changes to property classifications are required to be based on common sense, and are appealable without undue burdon on the property owner.

I own 40 acres in a rural area surrounded by farm land on all sides. It was ag property on a gravel road when I bought it, and it remains so today. There has never been a complaint filed about farming on my property.

My property classification was changed to residential in retaliation to a lawsuit I filed against a building contractor that included the FACT that the township building inspector was blind.

No, it wasn't that he had poor eyesight etc, he was legally blind and claiming that fact on his income taxes.

The township lied to the state dept of licensing and regulation and claimed the building inspector had no vision problems that hampered his ability to preform his job.

As a result of their actions my lawsuit was dragged out for years costing me tens of thousands of dollars.

It was all proven in court and I won 100% of the suit, but was never able to recover my losses.

When township government is able to operate in such a mannor and use property classification, and raising property taxes, to punish residents of the state that expose their abuse there can be no changes to the RTF law.

Milford Watson - Hanover Township

1-517-563-8348

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: jess@iammarked.com on behalf of Jessica Thompson <jess@stevethompson.us>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:33 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Michigan Right to Farm comment for Jan, 22, 2014

Dear Ms. Wilcox and MDARD,
Please do not infringe on the rights of individuals to produce their own food, as currently protected under the Michigan Right To Farm Act.
Countless cities in the US, Canada, and Europe have demonstrated how urban and suburban farming can be successfully implemented to the satisfaction of both farmers and their neighbors.
Americans who run small farms are regularly reduced to abandoning their livelihood in response to uneducated or petty complaints. We need to protect this most American of vocations.
Thank-you.
Jessica Thompson, who has fond hopes of having backyard chickens someday

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Pennie Christie <pennie_christie@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:32 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: MI Right To Farm Act Coments

To Whom It May Concern:

I am not in favor of the proposed changes to the Michigan Right To Farm Act. I believe these decisions need to be made and enforced at a local level since each community has their own needs. Local leaders and community members are quite capable of establishing ordinances which will enhance their well being within their neighborhoods. A one-size-fits-all mandate by the state is simply not suitable, does not serve the needs of the citizens.

Thank you.

Pennie Christie
49118 CR 352
Decatur, MI 49045

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: hollyfitz@travelleaders.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:31 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Support of small farm operations

Importance: High

Hello,

I am writing you to let you know I support individuals being able to own and raise small numbers of farm animals (chickens, goats, etc) in their backyards WITHOUT being under the control of site selection GAAMPs.

I am in full support of the 2013 GAAMPs and would like those rules to continue into 2014 and beyond.

I urge you to do what you can to extend the 2013 laws.

Please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,
Holly FitzGerald
3050 Foster Rd
Ann Arbor MI 48103

hollyfitz@travelleaders.com

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: hilary75 <hilaryh75@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:29 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: don't ruin my farm

I have a 2 acre parcel in Brighton and proposed changes could wipeout the work and investment I've put into my property for the past four years. When we purchased our 1877 farmhouse we signed a waiver stating we understood farming was ongoing in our area and that smells, noise and sounds could carry over onto our property. Since then we've been making jam from the blackberries, maple syrup from the maples and last year added a small flock of chickens. My nearest neighbors have stated that my chickens have not been offensive. These chickens provide my two young girls(ages 2&4) with fresh food not loaded with antibiotics and other chemicals. The chickens have also been a great learning tool already even at their young age. I have plans on making our small parcel a permaculture microfarm and the chickens will play a vital roll.

Brighton twp feels I should have 5 acres minimum for my 15 chickens. We are a family close to well fare since my wife is a teacher. When we signed our mortgage she had a contract that told us we could manage our payments for a couple years(it would be tight, but doable) until she was tenured at which point a significant raise would come into effect. Unfortunately that contract has been breached(renegotiated by the union) and we are near bankruptcy. Our farming endeavors are becoming more important all the time.

I am a born and raised Michigander, I grew up bailing hay on my Aunt's farm in the summer. I love our great state but if things get much worse we may have to move to Texas and live with my in-laws(my in-laws aren't bad but I don't want to live in TX). I have grown up defending Detroit as a great place and Michigan as a great state. The right to farm act confirmed my feelings at the state level. If it is changed I fear we will loose more of our farms and stop a new waive of small scale farming needing to support our ever growing population and changing world. California is suffering from drought at this very moment. Let's not increase our dependency on other states and countries. The statistics on what has happened to our nations farms over the past 50 years is unbelievable. We need as many farms as possible.

Thank You,
Matt Holmes

Sent from my iPad

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: Hubbel <mbhubbel@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:27 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

Hello,

I'm writing to ask you to vote no on any changes to the right to farm act. The proposal states that "sites that are exclusively zoned for residential use . . . are not acceptable locations for livestock facilities regardless of [the] number [of livestock]. Confining livestock in these locations does not conform to the siting GAAMP." In other words, **those with livestock on land exclusively zoned for residential use will no longer be protected by RTFA.** The changes would affect our backyard flock of chickens and our friends and neighbors who have backyard chicken flocks.

The right to have these small backyard flocks should not be taken away. We've enjoyed many benefits from our small flock. These include a measure of self sufficiency, the joy of caring for the animals, increased communication with our neighbors as they also enjoy the benefits of the eggs. I would hate to see this change.

Please do not take away our right to have farm animals in an area zoned for neighborhoods.

Sincerely,
Beth Hubbel

Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)

From: chris gallup <gallupsawmill@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:25 AM
To: Wilcox, Rhonda (MDA)
Subject: Right to farm act

Hello I am concerned for my right to farm act protection. I am a 6th generation farmer here. We have been here since the 1850's and have had livestock all the while. I purchased 5 acres from my grandfather so I could live and work on our family farm. Not by our choice, but the township zoned it residential property when we broke it off of a 40 that was agricultural. I build a barn and keep horses and calves on my 5 acres. If my family is not protected by the right to farm act with our livestock, then who is it protecting? I love our property and like to live here, but we live near other homes and we need this protection.

Thanks for reading this. Thank you for your time.

Christopher Gallup
Kalamazoo MI

Sent from my iPhone