

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE AND  
GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

*William B. Hunt, AICP, Director*

Harry Knight, Deputy Director



**Commissioners of St. Mary's County**

James Randy Guy, President  
Eric Colvin, Commissioner  
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner  
Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner  
John E. O'Connor, Commissioner

November 16, 2021

To: Commissioners of St. Mary's County  
Dr. Rebecca Bridgett, County Administrator

Fr: William B. Hunt, Director *WBH*  
Chris Kaselemis, Director *CK*

**Request for Public Hearing Staff Proposal**

Topic: Alcoholic Beverage Production Ordinance

Background: In February 2020, Grow and Fortify, a company that assists new, value-added, agricultural businesses, organized a meeting of existing and potential businesses wanting to produce alcoholic beverages in St. Mary's County. Attendees at that meeting identified standards in the Zoning Ordinance that make it difficult for agricultural alcoholic beverage production businesses to get started. The departments of Land Use and Growth Management and Economic Development began writing an amendment to remove impediments and encourage the growth of on-farm alcoholic beverage production. In July 2021 the concepts of the changes suggested by stakeholders were presented to the County Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Board. All stakeholders have supported amending the Zoning Ordinance.

Plan for Stakeholder Input and Notification: Those on the email lists of stakeholders will be sent notice of the public hearing. In addition, owners of alcoholic beverage production businesses on file with Land Use and Growth Management will also be notified. The PIO will be asked to put the notice of the public hearing on the County website, and it will be advertised on the departments' webpages.

<i>NAME OF ORG</i>	<i>TYPE of CONTACT</i>
Stakeholder attendees at the February 2020 meeting	Email to attendees
Agriculture, Seafood, Forestry Board Members	Email
Owners of alcoholic beverage production businesses based on applications to Land Use and Growth Management	Email
Tamara E. Hildebrand, Board Administrator, St. Mary's County Alcohol Beverage Board	Email

Departmental Response:

Land Use and Growth Management and the Department of Economic Development have used the feedback to draft a zoning ordinance amendment to address identified challenges and encourage the growth of on alcoholic beverage production. The Agriculture, Seafood and

Forestry Board sent a letter to the Commissioners expressing general support of the proposed zoning ordinance amendment to combine the existing three alcohol production uses into one use of agricultural alcoholic beverage production; to add a performance standard that requires agricultural alcoholic beverage production use be located on real property that has an agricultural use assessment by the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation; and to require the permit submission and review process for the use agricultural alcoholic beverage production be a minor site plan.

As staff considered the amendment for agricultural alcoholic beverage production, the topic of alcoholic beverage production for locations other than farms arose. Alcoholic beverage production is an attraction for tourism overall. Staff expanded the proposed zoning ordinance to include production of alcoholic beverages outside an agricultural location. Like agricultural beverage production, the general production of alcoholic beverages would be allowed with the approval of a minor site plan. Alcoholic beverage production outside the AICUZ will be allowed along with tasting rooms and serving of beverages and food; beverage and food service will not be allowed within the AICUZ.

Timeline:

November 16 – Request for Public Hearing  
November 19 – Publish Public Notice  
November 26 – Publish Public Notice  
December 7 – Public Hearing **Time TBD**  
December 14 – End of Public Comment Period  
January 4, 2022 – CSMC Decision