

Testimony by Phil Freedman  
before the Montgomery County School Board  
Rockville, MD  
March 8, 2011

I have a small organic farm on the edge of the Montgomery County Ag Reserve, I have fed many families of Montgomery County Residents for the last 12 years. I work with the Poolesville High School Global Ecology program to provide senior projects and field trips. I rely on Nick Maravell's organic GMO FREE seed and feed for my operation.

Nick grows organic seed at the Brickyard road site, this unique site allows his seed crops not to be tainted by GMO seeds from other farms, because it is seclusion from other farming operations. I can tell you from experience, it takes many years to create a site for organic farming, beneficial insects and bacteria must be cultivated for years to make a successful operation. A organic farm is not easily relocated like a private ball field might. Nick has sustainably farmed this site for 31 years, but without ANY warning you have decided not to renew his lease? The school board knew the county executive wanted this site in June 2010, but still you did not notify this renter of 31 years? I wonder why the lack of transparency? . Why wasn't Nick notified? If you were a neighbor or a landlord or a son of a landlord and not a faceless government organization, you would be embarrassed about how this has been handled. You would have a 31 year relationship with Nick and integrity might force you to discuss plans with such a renter. Each of you on the School board needs to look at this situation as if he/she where human being and do the right thing. maintain the 31 year relationship with this good renter and invaluable member of the community. This farm is not easily replaced, but maybe Montgomery Soccer Inc's 186th soccer field in Montgomery county could easily be replaced somewhere else.