

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2026 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CR-040-2026

Draft No.: 2

Committee: PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date: 6/04/2026

Action: FAVORABLE
WITH
AMENDMENTS

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable with Amendments, 4-0 (In favor: Committee Chair Blegay, Council Members Adams-Stafford, Dernoga, and Olson)

The Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee met on June 4, 2026, 2026, to consider CR-040-2026.

The PHED Committee Director, Rana Hightower, summarized the purpose of the legislation and informed committee members about public comments and feedback received from agencies within Prince George's County.

As presented on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, Draft-1 or the purpose of establishing the Prince George's County Agritourism and Winery Promotion Pilot Program in partnership with the Maryland Wineries Association and Experience Prince George's, and allocating Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to fund signage, marketing, and promotional efforts to support wineries and other agribusinesses in Prince George's County.

Mr. David Noto, Legislative Budget & Policy Analyst, provided a policy and fiscal analysis of the resolution. He explained that the resolution establishes a one-year pilot program for agritourism and winery promotion, administered by Destination Prince George's. aims to improve directional signage, enhance marketing efforts, promote events, and foster partnerships to increase public awareness of wineries and agritourism in the county.

Maryland has 80 wine producers projected to generate about \$4.28 billion in revenue, with over \$69 million in tourism-related economic activity statewide. Currently, seven wineries operate in Prince George's County, according to the Maryland Wineries Association.

The adoption of CR-040-2026 will allocate \$50,000 from the County's General Fund for signage, marketing, and promotional activities related to the Agritourism and Winery Promotion Pilot Program. This initiative has the potential to positively impact the County by boosting tourism and increasing consumer spending at local wineries, farms, restaurants, hotels, and other related businesses. The heightened activity may lead to additional economic benefits for local operators, surrounding communities, and the State of Maryland.

Council Member Dernoga, the bill sponsor that the impetus for this legislation came from February 26, 2026, County Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment (TIEE) Committee briefing received from Winery Industry in Prince George's County. During that briefing it was explained that they did not have funding for signage. This resolution would not exclude wineries that are located outside the southern portion of the County. Council Member Dernoga disagreed that the legislation is limited to wineries. Council Member questioned the number of wineries that are in the County. Mr. Noto explained he based his language on the Maryland Wine Association's webpage.

The Town of Bladensburg submitted a letter supporting CR-040-2026 along with a resolution adopted by the Town of Bladensburg for the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of the Bostwick House as a multipurpose event space with tasting winery

The Planning Department staff submitted written comments on the proposed legislation. The comments are as follows:

1. Narrow Program Scope

- Recommend restructuring so wineries are one component within a broader agritourism framework (e.g., add a Heritage Harvest Trail or Farm-to-Table Corridor alongside the Legacy Wine Trail).

2. No Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Requirements

- The resolution does not require MWBE participation, disadvantaged farmer outreach, or equity criteria for fund allocation.
- Recommend adding language requiring adding language requiring the County's destination marketing organization (DMO) to prioritize MWBE-certified agribusinesses.

3. Regulatory Barriers Are Named but Not Addressed

- Recommend adding language for the collaborative partnership to inventory zoning and regulatory barriers and report recommendations to the Council and Planning Board, and in CR-40-2026 direct the DMO to include regulatory barrier findings in its final report, with zoning amendment recommendations.
- Include a definition of Agritourism, include the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement (DPIE) and Planning representatives and include that future economic development funding 2037 be tied to further promoting agritourism in the county and incorporated into economic development strategy to give it fair footing against other industries and staffing and resources.

4. Federal Funding Language Is Too Passive

- Recommend changing to "shall actively pursue and report on" federal, state, and other funding opportunities.

5. No Community Engagement

- Recommend requiring at least one stakeholder engagement session with diverse agribusiness operators (including but not limited to small and beginning farmers,

MWBE producers, and community food organizations) before the signage plan and marketing strategy are finalized.

6. No Success Metrics

- Recommend adding metrics like number of agribusinesses participating, visitors, signage installed, economic activity generated, MWBE participation rate, and funds secured per County.

Ms. Amy McCurdy, Sales and Marketing Manager for the P.A. Bowen Farmstead in Brandywine, Maryland, spoke in support of the resolution. P.A. Bowen Farmstead is an award-winning cheese farm.

Ms. Kim Rush Lynch, Urban Agricultural Conservation Planner and Program Manager for the Prince George's County Soil Conservation District, spoke in support of the resolution on behalf of Mr. Steve Darcy, the District Manager. She explained that agritourism is a way to keep farms viable.

Ms. Pam Skinner, a Bowie resident testified requesting information how the \$50,000 will be spent on a promotional pilot program to support wineries and other agritourism businesses instead of addressing critical County needs such as public schools, road safety, housing affordability and public safety. She also inquired about the criteria used to qualify agritourism businesses and wineries for marketing promotion. Additionally, she asked about the decision-making process, who will decide whether an agritourism business or winery receives funding, and how much money can be allocated to promote each individual business or winery. Ms. Skinner also asked for clarification on the words "emerging ventures" written within the resolution.

PHED Committee Chair Blegay thanked the speakers and noted there was a strong emphasis on education, as the County approved a nearly \$3 billion budget for educational purposes. This funding is to invest in our wineries and agritourism businesses. Many other states substantially fund this growing industry.

Council Member Adams-Stafford explained that when the resolution mentions "emerging ventures" the intent is to assist startups or companies where the gross revenue is under a million dollars a year. She also explained that it is hard for many minority and women owned business to gain access to capital and small businesses need assistance to grow.

Council Member Dernoga explained that the term "emerging ventures" is aspirational, as the County is trying to promote the expanding agritourism industry. He further explained that Destination Prince George's will designate and administer the pilot program. He also explained that the pilot program is for digital marketing (maps, brochures, and social media), directional and promotional signage along major roads, and heritage tourism corridors.

Council Member Dernoga provided an overview of the amendments to the resolution. The amendments are as follows:

On page 1, line 11, delete the word "six (6)" and replace it with the phrase "a growing number of." This technical amendment will ensure that all wineries are accounted for.

Delete “Experience Prince George’s” and replace with “Destination Prince George’s” throughout the resolution. This technical amendment ensures the correct destination marketing organization is named within the legislation.

On page 3, line 31, remove the words “explore opportunities to leverage federal through” and replace with the words “actively pursue and report on federal, state, and other funding opportunities, such as.” This amendment recommended by Planning Department staff ensures that Destination Prince George’s actively pursues opportunities to leverage federal, state and other funding to supplement the pilot program.

The revised language would read: “BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Destination Prince George’s shall actively pursue and report on federal, state, and other funding opportunities, such as the United States Department of Agriculture, agricultural innovation grants, and other philanthropic or governmental sources to supplement the County’s investment in the Pilot Program;”

On motion of Council Member Dernoga, seconded by Council Member Blegay, the PHED Committee voted 4-0 favorably on the amendments mentioned above.

Next, on motion on Council Member Dernoga, seconded by Council Member Blegay, the PHED Committee voted 4-0 favorably on CR-040-2026 as amended.