

County's agricultural lands. The ordinance is intended to prevent nuisance lawsuits, which may arise from residential growth in agricultural areas and protect the economic viability of farming in Caroline County.

In 2007, according to statistics prepared by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and Agricultural Census, Caroline County had 574 farms with an average farm size of 229 acres.

Table 7-1: Agriculture Economic Statistics – Caroline County			
Agricultural Classifications	1997	2002	2007
Number of Farms	556	506	574
Average Farm Size (Acres)	202	227	229
Land in Farms (Acres)	112,545	114,843	131,277
Market Value of Production – Avg. Per Farm	\$189,728	\$206,242	\$324,109
Total Farm Production Expenses	\$95,335,000	\$86,582,000	\$142,006,000
Total Farm Production Expenses - Avg. Per Farm	\$170,545	\$170,437	\$247,398
Government Payments	\$706,000	\$1,870,000	\$3,028,000
Average per Farm Receiving Payment	\$4,059	\$9,398	\$8,318
TOTAL - Market Value of Production	\$105,489,000	\$104,358,000	\$186,039,000
United States Department of Agriculture: National Agricultural Statistics Service			

As shown in Table 7-1, in 2007 the County generated \$186 million from agricultural industries. This is an increase in total production value from 1997 (\$105 million) It is important to note that government payments increased from \$706,000 in 1997 to \$1,870,000 in 2002 to \$3,028,000 in 2007, which assisted in preserving the agricultural industry sector.

Mineral Extraction

Caroline County's sand and gravel is a valuable non-renewable resource that should be extracted and used with careful thought regarding the future. These minerals are important to both the local and national economy. Section 15-802; Title 15; Subtitle 8: Surface Mining of the Annotated Code of Maryland states that "local jurisdictions must protect mineral resources from the encroachment of other land uses that could potentially make these resources unavailable for future use." In addition, surface mining laws require that land uses be balanced to ensure areas for mineral extraction. In 1975, Surface Mining Laws were enacted in Maryland, mainly for implementing environmental controls through State approved mining and reclamation plans and processes. A two-tiered process of State and

local regulations assists in preserving mineral resources, while also allowing flexibility for the mining industry.

Growth and development should be located appropriately to protect our mineral resources. While the County should not prohibit or deter mining operations near municipalities or Transferable Development Rights receiving areas, careful consideration should be given to the impacts of mining operations on residents, roads and aesthetics. Surface mining should continue to be an accepted use in the County approved by “Special Use Exception” through the Caroline County Board of Zoning Appeals. Through this process, “quality of life” issues for nearby residents should be considered during Special Use Exception process. Reclamation issues and site specific conditions should be addressed at that time.

As of September 2008, Caroline Count had 23 active surface mining operations. Of the active operations, 6 are for the purpose of creating an irrigation pond for farming operations.

Surface Mining Performance and Site Mitigation Standards

The development of detailed “Surface Mining Performance and Site Mitigation Standards” (Performance Standards) is needed for Caroline County. Performance Standards should apply to both small and large-scale surface mining operations to mitigate potential conflicts. Performance Standards should include detailed plans for each phase of the surface mine with particular emphasis on pre-planning (buffering, landscaping etc.) and end use (site mitigation/reclamation). Due to the County’s flat topography, surface mining operations in rural areas are highly visible. Therefore, Performance Standards should preserve scenic rural quality and visual aesthetics, in addition to quality of life. Buffers are essential to alleviate public concerns and landscaping should include indigenous vegetation suitable to existing climate and soil conditions. Tall story and under-story vegetation is required and buffering should be initiated before mineral extraction commences to provide suitable time for vegetation to grow.

Mineral Extraction Tax

Surface mining industries place burdens on local infrastructure, particularly large-scale operations located on County roads, creating an undue burden for local taxpayers. Truck traffic generated by the industry negatively impact County and town roads requiring additional repair and maintenance. In addition, inappropriately located mineral extraction enterprises can detract from County visual aesthetics and scenic resources, adversely impacting tourism initiatives and the local economy.

The development of a Mineral Extraction Tax will compensate the public for the loss of resources that leave the County for other areas of the State and nation and will compensate the County for additional road repairs and upgrades. Caroline County should coordinate with

regional counties to assist in the enactment of a Mineral Extraction Tax. Past and current efforts to enact a Mineral Extraction Tax have met with State resistance therefore a regional multi-jurisdictional effort is required to facilitate efforts. Organizations like the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) and local State legislators can greatly assist efforts for the development of a Mineral Extraction Tax.

Other Industries

According to the earnings by industry prepared by Maryland Department of Planning, earnings by private industry are increasing overall. The industries that saw notable increases during the period between 2001 and 2007 were construction, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, and accommodation and food services. The retail trade industry is showing a decline.

Table 7-2: Earnings by Industry (in thousands of dollars)							
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Farm earnings	8,054	747	9,505	18,396	17,543	11,134	17,549
Nonfarm earnings	304,926	335,136	362,001	386,563	415,427	420,008	433,726
Total	312,980	335,883	371,506	404,959	432,970	431,142	451,275
Private earnings	245,032	269,771	293,639	314,768	342,768	340,977	347,993
Construction	33,539	36,265	40,241	47,042	50,077	54,620	53,965
Manufacturing	60,705	57,283	61,962	61,988	75,057	68,369	61,293
Retail Trade	47,719	45,417	46,748	43,816	41,940	40,556	40,074
Transportation and warehousing	16,374	21,986	23,665	31,644	41,613	39,762	45,338
Finance and insurance	5,525	7,359	8,496	9,806	9,968	9,986	11,063
Real estate and rental and leasing	5,615	6,265	7,467	8,060	8,671	8,003	7,714
Administrative and waste services	5,421	6,268	7,718	9,152	9,400	7,352	7,795
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,258	1,538	1,625	1,646	(D)	(D)	2,368
Accommodation and food services	2,806	3,709	(D)	5,871	5,638	(D)	6,247
Other	67,948	66,112	77,867	90,191	90,202	90,165	103,282
Government and government enterprises	59,894	65,365	68,362	71,795	72,659	79,031	85,733
Prepared by the Maryland Department of Planning from U.S. BEA Table CA05N, April 2009.							
(D) = Not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information but included in totals							

Commuting & Employment Characteristics

As shown in Table 7-3, the County has exceptional access to regional markets. Transportation improvements, such as the dualization of MD Route 404, will greatly increase access for commuters. Close proximity to major U.S. cities and highways can create