

To: Queen Anne's County Commissioners

The presentation by the GSA concerning the Hard Skills Training Facility implied that the facility would bring to the County jobs and needed economic and tax base increases. The Hart telephone poll talks of providing "new revenue for local government and services". The statements mislead the citizens and governors of the County to believe that all this activity being brought to the county will be good for the average citizen. The reverse is true. This facility will bring higher taxes, as well as the things that are easily recognizable, such as crowded roads, loss of our valuable agricultural base, and noise and light pollution.

The proposed hard skills facility hits the county with a triple-whammy for a tax increase. Not only are we taking away 2000 acres of tax positive farmland, we are substituting for it a business which produces zero taxes, and taking even more land for tax negative residential use for employees of that business which pays no taxes. I don't believe anyone could study the numbers involved without predicting a tax increase for the county. The American Farmland Trust has run over 100 studies of counties and areas like ours, and every one of them has shown that residential land use cost the county more than it collected in taxes on that land and its improvements. Only by taxing other sectors of the community (industrial, commercial, farmland and open space and forests) more than the cost of services provided to them, is the county able to maintain a balanced budget.

Let's look at the study made for our neighbor, Kent County Maryland.

2001 FISCAL YEAR	RESIDENTIAL	INDUSTRIAL/ COMMERCIAL	FARM/OPEN
LAND			
a) Total Revenues	\$26,012,868	\$21,177,037	\$2,060,743
b) Total Expenditures	\$24,876,277	\$22,242,430	\$ 860,079
Net surplus or (shortfall)	\$1,136,591	\$ (1,065,393)	\$1,200,665
Ratio of tax dollars/cost of services	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.64	1 : 0.42

Residential **cost** \$1.065M more in services than it paid in taxes, Industrial/Commercial **paid** \$1.001M more than it cost, and Farm/Open land **paid** \$1.2M more than it cost in services. Think what would happen to Kent County if they suddenly took away 2000 acres of taxpaying farm land and added additional residential land to support the new people working in that non taxpaying former agricultural area. Their budget surplus would soon be eaten up, and taxes would have to be increased.

THIS PROPOSED TRAINING CENTER BRINGS US TRAFFIC, NOISE, POLLUTION, AND DAMAGE TO OUR AGRICULTURAL BASE. PLEASE DO NOT INCREASE OUR TAXES FOR THIS PROJECT THAT HURTS OUR COUNTY IN SO MANY OTHER WAYS.

The 2 studies that support these figures can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.farmland.org/programs/states/DelmarvaProject.asp>

www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27757/COCS_8-06.pdf - Similar