



Testimony of Kathy Gramp
Regarding bill 25-17 as amended June 19, 2017: Agritourism
Date: July 3, 2017

Agritourism and value-added processing could help our economy and neighborhoods—if they are done right. Unfortunately, the language in Bill 25-17 fails to achieve that goal. We urge you to reject it.

AHB—along with a coalition of community and rural business interests —has spent considerable time and effort to improve the bill, focusing on ways to support farming, protect the environment, and preserve rural lifestyles. That work needs to continue, with an eye toward legislation that will adhere to four key principals:

- **First, eligibility should be tied directly to farming.** This bill creates incentives for nonfarmers to game the rules on “accessory uses.” Only bona fide farmers should be eligible for special zoning treatment.
- **Second, zoning uses must have transparent, legally enforceable definitions.** Terms like “value-added processing” are so vague that neither the county nor federal government can clearly describe it. We’ve been told that zoning officials will simply “know it when they see it.” If an activity can’t be defined in a court of law, it shouldn’t be permitted in every residential district and in environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Third, there should be conditions tailored to the scale, location, and type of activity.** We urge you to consider having more than one zoning category for agritourism because it covers such a wide variety of activities. The same holds for value-added processing: the code should distinguish between processing done in a home versus processing done in a new building.
- **Finally, property owners must be accountable for zoning uses.** Some kind of licensing regime is needed to ensure compliance, especially for events that otherwise may not require permits.

AHB looks forward to collaborating with you and other farming and community interests to ensure that agriculture flourishes for the benefit of all.