

March 18, 2024
PA Office of Attorney General
Attn: ACRE
15th Floor, Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Attorney General Michelle Henry,

I am writing you today to request your assistance in advocating for our family farm. My name is [REDACTED] and I am a Pennsylvanian born and breed. I've lived my entire life on this glorious land known as Pennsylvania other than a stint in the United States Air Force. During my military service I was an honor graduate from an honor flight in basic training where I also acquired a marksmanship ribbon. Unfortunately, I was also injured in the line of duty and received an Honorable Discharge with a disability rating. I am a business graduate from Penn State University and for almost 20 years I have used my business acumen to provided affordable housing and recovery opportunities for men and women struggling to overcome drug and alcohol addiction in Philadelphia. During the Coronavirus Outbreak, my wife and I were forced to transition from our established means of employment to forge our path in what is still a little known alternative to large breed livestock. And this alternative also aligns with many green initiatives or at least provides a healthy compromise between farming of the past and our planet's hopes for farming in the future. Our mission is Micro Mini Cows; breeding and bringing awareness to the much less invasive effect they have on the environment. As compared to their massively large breed predecessors, a micro mini cow is approximately 1/3 the size.

We have been developing this agricultural endeavor and preparing our property and making investments for well over a year now. We have sunk considerable investment into our agricultural operation. We have purchased a large amount of inputs to the tune of about \$40,000.00 or more. Pretty much my entire life savings. Our most significant purchase came in the form of 2 micro mini cows at the cost of \$20,000.00. From the breeding of these 2 prize cows we expect to generate a minimum of \$10,000.00 in gross receipts from the sale of the offspring (supply is limited and demand is high). With both the time and gross receipts criteria met, we are acting in good faith under the protections of this law and any intervention on the township's behalf would violate these protections and cause me and my family an undue burden and hardship.

We are currently operating on two attached parcels, one deeded in my name and one deed in my wife's name, totaling just over 1/2 acre. The minimum township requirement, according to Coolbaugh Township Ordinance § 400-57 *Agricultural uses; crop production and animal husbandry*, is 2 acres to have livestock (see attached). Animal husbandry is allowed in our R3 zoned district as a *Principal Permitted Use* (see attached), the caveat being that it is restricted to "home use". We intend to use the byproduct of the offspring (milk) for my family's personal consumption so the ordinances start to get a bit gray, no longer simply black or white. All that being said, we are looking for a larger piece of land to ultimately expand but will not be adding additional permanent cows to our current property. We are making offers when we can but currently we are priced out of the

market and are waiting for prices to cool off. Also, there have been no complaints of public nuisance against our property (see FOIA request included). If fact we have commitments from direct neighbors endorsing and offering their properties for acreage calculations so we are not forced to relocate immediately.

We feel as though these local ordinances do not align with the future of agriculture, something that was recognized in the PA Farm Bill and subsequent Right To Farm Act. They inhibit innovation and diversity, creating less resilient and dynamic agricultural practices. We are currently scheduled for a court hearing on April 1st, 2024, where we will defend our farm to the Honorable [REDACTED] in the Magisterial District Court [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]. We have been sued by Coolbaugh Township citing our farm activity of keeping 2 mini cows, 7 chickens and necessary storage capabilities (2 shipping containers they deem to be accessory structures along with a shed). Upon receiving our first violation in August of 2022, we attempted to reach out to the Zoning Officer, [REDACTED] for clarity on some of the local ordinances we found confusing. We received no response but also received no further enforcement action; even though, our corner property is highly visible and on a township roadway. Our second violation was issued by the Director of Zoning, [REDACTED] about 10 months later for not having permits for these 2 shipping containers where we currently store hay. Once again I contacted zoning, now addressing [REDACTED] with no response but no enforcement. Then 2 months later we get overwhelmed with 3 more violations which must have been prompted by the arrival of our mini cows. Again, I reached out to [REDACTED] to update him on our situation and again received no reply. That is when I saw Zoning Director [REDACTED] in the early hours of the morning, quickly drive past our house to take pictures and then drive off again without making any effort to talk. That is when I emailed [REDACTED] (the contact person for FOIA request too) for any nuisance complaints. Immediately he responded with the information that there have been none. That is when I wrote 3 letters to address the 3 violations for our farming activity only to be sued by [REDACTED] on 2/15/2024.

Our hope was to discuss the code and to explain our situation for a fair and equitable solution for all involved but have only been met with silence until this lawsuit. Please help us and our budding family farm.

Sincerely,