

2/27/2025

Chair Al Long and Hans Hilbert  
Dane County Board of Adjustment  
City County Building, Room 116  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703

RE: Maier Farms Real Estate, LLC Appeal 3727

Dear Chair Long and Mr. Hilbert:

The Town of Springfield asks the Dane County Board of Adjustment to grant Maier Farms' appeal and cease zoning enforcement activity against Maier Farms. We recognize that Maier Farms is not located in the Town of Springfield, but the issues affecting the Maiers are affecting and will continue to affect farmers throughout the County, including in the Town of Springfield. The Town believes Dane County must reconsider its approach to regulating farm activities through its zoning ordinances, particularly when farm activities are already subject to federal and state level regulations.

Farming is central to the Town of Springfield's past, present, and future. As we state in our Comprehensive Plan, the Town's heritage is "centered on farming" and "farming is also a way of life for many Town residents." Approximately 70% of the Town of Springfield was farmed in 2010. But as you know, continuing residential development is converting more of the Town to residential development and subjecting more of the Town to annexation.

Continued loss of agricultural land in Dane County is bad for our economy. In our Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Springfield lists as objectives preserving productive farmlands for continued agricultural use, encouraging the development of different forms of agriculture, and limiting the amount and guide the placement of housing and other non-agricultural uses in planned agricultural areas. For the Town to achieve these objectives, it needs Dane County as a partner.

There really is no debate that our area has been getting more intense rain events in recent years. As a result, the increasing threat of flooding puts farmers' livelihoods at risk. The use of drain tile systems is one potential mitigation tool farmers have to fight back against flooding. The use of such systems is regulated by federal and state authorities. There is no need for the County to add additional burdens to farmers who are working to maintain their fields.

The Town understands that the Maiers obtained both federal and state approval for their use of drain tile. It appears the County is the only authority that objects to the Maier's use of a drain tile system. If Dane County is going to object to or prohibit farmers from using drain tile systems,

which are necessary to prevent flooding and crop loss, then the County will continue to lose productive cropland each year. This does not benefit anyone.

The Town of Springfield hopes the Board of Adjustment will consider the effects its decision in the Maier appeal will have. More farmers will be seeking to install drain tile systems in the coming years, due to increased rainfall. If the County prohibits the use of drain tile under its zoning ordinances, then the County is committing itself to reducing the amount of productive farmland in the County. The Town of Springfield does not want to see an unnecessary loss of cropland in Dane County.

Sincerely,



Town of Springfield Board

Dave Laufenberg, Chair