

October 12, 2023

FINAL

Process for Updating Sustainability Zone Boundaries to Accommodate Contiguous Farming Operations

It is anticipated that the Sustainability Zones as adopted by the MSGSA Governing Board on September 14, 2023 may, unintentionally, bisect existing farming operations in to two or more zones (where “existing” is defined as operations as of September 14, 2023 or as can be demonstrated to have been practiced within some point since January 30, 2020). In order to accommodate these existing operations and allow an owner or operator (hereafter “owner”) to manage their contiguous operations within a single Sustainability Zone, Zone boundaries may be updated using the process outlined below.

- 1) If an existing farming operation is bisected by a Sustainability Zone boundary, the owner has the option to request the contiguous parcels be reclassified into a single Sustainability Zone, where:
 - a. Parcels in the farming operation must be contiguous. Non-contiguous parcels that hopscotch over other parcels are not eligible to be reclassified into a single Sustainability Zone.
 - b. The owner(s) of the contiguous land beneath the farming operation is/are the same or substantially similar as determined by the MSGSA Governing Board.
 - c. Parcel reclassified into the applicable Sustainability Zone cannot exceed 300 acres.
- 2) The owner may petition the MSGSA Governing Board through a written letter submitted to contact@mercedsubbasingsa.org on or before December 20, 2023. The letter must describe the existing farming operations across the parcels, identify the contiguous parcel numbers and the property owners of the parcels, and confirmation that those parcels are part of a managed farming operation. The letter must be signed by the property owner(s) of record or their designated representative.
- 3) If the parcels are contiguous, the MSGSA will shift the Sustainability Zone boundary line to reclassify the entire farming operation in the Sustainability Zone where the majority of the existing farming operation is located. If the existing farming operation is equally split (50/50 by acres) in two Sustainability Zones, the owner may request the Sustainability Zone of preference.
- 4) An owner requesting a change after December 20, 2023 must submit a petition to the MSGSA Board and any consideration of a change will be subject to the Board’s discretion. Sustainability Zones will be under review every five years.