

October 22, 1999

TO: Joseph N. Morgan, County Administrator

FROM: Pete Huber, Assistant County Administrator

SUBJECT: Noise Control

The Board of Supervisors requested county staff research the effectiveness of noise controls in other rural jurisdictions prior to responding to the request by the Planning Commission for a general understanding of the intention of the Board to adopt some type of noise control. The following summarizes information obtained by the staff:

Wythe County (population: 28,466; area: 259 square miles)

Does not have an ordinance

Montgomery County (population: 77,000; area: 391 square miles)

Montgomery County has had a noise ordinance for about fifteen years, which is enforced by the Sheriff's Office. Noise limits are given in decibels, and vary according to time of day (lower limits at night) and zoning district (higher limits in industrial districts). The Sheriff's Office has a decibel meter, and they enforce the ordinance in response to complaints. It seems to work pretty well.

Bedford County (population: 56,000; area: 763 square miles)

County Administrator Bill Rolfe reports the Bedford County noise ordinance has been helpful to him in resolving noise issues related to barking dogs, loud radios and conflicts between residential and industrial uses. Mr. Rolfe sees the lack of decibel limits as a weakness in the ordinance.

Botetourt County (population: 29,000; area: 549 square miles)

Has helped in controlling loud radio and party noise. The Botetourt ordinance, which does not have decibel levels specified and exempts industries, is currently under review as part of a comprehensive evaluation of land-use regulations.

Smyth County (population: 33,320; area: 435 square miles)

Sheriff Bradley who administers the Smyth County ordinance reports the ordinance has been helpful in addressing parties, dogs, and loud music complaints. He notes that the ordinance needs revising to address barking dogs in agricultural areas currently exempt from the ordinance.

Shenandoah County (population: 34,300; area: 507 square miles)

Does not have an ordinance but has revised their dog control ordinance to control barking dogs and controls field parties through requiring an entertainment permit.

Board members may want to talk to fellow elected officials at the VACO conference to obtain additional input regarding the viability of a noise control ordinance for Pulaski County.