



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

4026-B Hummer Road · Annandale, Virginia 22003-2403
703-658-9150 · www.lwv-fairfax.org

February 11, 2013

Dear Fairfax County Executive Edward Long and Chief Financial Officer Susan Datta,

We in the League of Women Voters thank you for the opportunity to provide some preliminary comments as you develop and consider the 2014 County budget. Our comments are based on materials provided for community engagement sessions.

Ranking Board Priorities forced us to examine our own value systems. Here is the result of our straw vote:

- Quality educational system
- Living, caring and affordable communities
- Clean, sustainable environment tied with transportation
- Safe streets and neighborhoods
- Vibrant economy
- Recreational and cultural opportunities
- Affordable taxes

To reduce the **Budget Shortfall**, we favor a slight hike in property taxes. Because Fairfax County offers tax relief for those who qualify, we feel that this would not overburden vulnerable members of our communities. We also suggest a meal and hotel tax, a gas surtax, reducing the use of contractors, merging such areas as payroll, procurement, school / public libraries and an examination of the pension system.

We feel that we need more information to comment on **County Ownership of Its Roads**. We would need to know how much it would cost to buy road-maintenance equipment and pay the salaries and benefits for the crews who would operate it. Unless we missed it, the budget materials contained no information on this subject.

Budget Materials: Those of us who accessed your PowerPoint Presentation thought it was a big help in understanding the complexities of the budget. It was written in layman's terms and used verbal descriptions and charts as well as numbers to describe the County's financial situation. We hope that materials describing all future budgets will include such a document.

Our members also suggest more publicity for early budget briefings to the public.

The League of Women Voters appreciates your efforts to balance the needs of all residents and businesses in approaching budget issues. We also applaud your seeking comments from all of us who will be affected by your budget decisions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Helen Kelly, Co-President

Copies to: Chairman Bulova and Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors