

FY 2013 Fairfax County budget  
Testimony from the Environmental Quality Advisory Council—Stella Koch, Chairman

My name is Stella Koch and I am speaking on behalf of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council. I am speaking in support of two specific budget areas: (1) funding for Environmental Improvement Program projects; and (2) the proposed increase in the Stormwater Service District rate by a penny, from a rate of 1.5 cents per \$100 assessed real estate value to 2.5 cents per \$100.

The Environmental Improvement Program supports implementation of the Board's Environmental Agenda. This year's budget proposes \$350,000 of funding for several environmental initiatives, including energy efficient lighting upgrades at Fairfax County Park Authority facilities; natural landscaping efforts at county properties; continuation of the Park Authority-managed Invasive Plant Removal Program; and other strategic initiatives. EQAC supports the Board's continued commitment to its Environmental Agenda through the provision of funding for EIP projects and supports the proposed funding of these projects.

In 1998, \$500,000 was committed to fund the first county-wide stream assessment, with the results published in late 2000. This laid the groundwork for our understanding of Fairfax County's streams and the stewardship needed to protect and restore them.

Since then, the county has revised its Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance in order to comprehensively protect perennial stream buffers throughout the county; this followed a study, paid for by the county, that carefully delineated those perennial portions of streams. Staff continues to monitor a portion of our streams each year, and by February 2011, watershed plans were completed for all 30 of the county's watersheds. These watershed plans need funding to be implemented.

The county also owns and maintains 1,565 stormwater management facilities and BMPs and is responsible for both inspection and maintenance of those facilities. The county also maintains 1,500 miles of pipe and 45,000 inlets and manholes and over 100 miles of manmade channels. Much of the pipe and channel infrastructure is aging concrete. It is estimated that somewhat under a billion dollars will be needed in the coming years to replace this aging infrastructure.

These streams are not isolated geography in Fairfax County. They meander through our backyards, cross our roads and parallel many of our trails. All we have to do is remember the heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding of September 8, 2011 to understand how significant both the management of our stormwater and the stewardship of our streams are to the very fabric of our lives. This additional penny is a small step towards achieving those goals. EQAC urges you to support the proposed increase in the Stormwater Service District rate by a penny, from a rate of 1.5 cents per \$100 assessed real estate value to 2.5 cents per \$100.