



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 22, 2012

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Stella Koch, Chairman *Stella M. Koch*
Environmental Quality Advisory Council

SUBJECT: EQAC support for the Northern Virginia Regional Water Supply Plan and related recommendations

On Wednesday February 8, EQAC received a presentation from Traci Goldberg (Manager, Planning, Fairfax Water) describing the draft Northern Virginia Regional Water Supply Plan. Present also was Normand Goulet, Senior Environmental Planner, Northern Virginia Regional Commission; NVRC has served as the project manager for this effort. After the presentation, EQAC adopted, by a unanimous vote of the members present, the positions outlined in this letter. I am forwarding this letter for your consideration as you consider the draft plan at your February 28 meeting.

The draft plan carefully documents the present and predicted water supply needs for the Northern Virginia region for the coming decades. We appreciate the effort and feel that the plan meets the specific needs associated with the legislative mandate that spurred this effort. However, given the predicted demands on future water supplies, EQAC feels that there are two broader issues that should be addressed, perhaps outside of the context of this particular document. Our recommendations on these issues are as follows:

- 1) **EQAC feels that there should be an increased emphasis on more robust programs to minimize water usage.** While there is a section on water conservation as part of the draft plan, EQAC feels that Fairfax Water and Fairfax County should increase their commitments and practices to conserving water supplies through additional education, more tiered water pricing programs and other incentive measures that are being tried and used throughout the country and have proven effective.
- 2) **EQAC feels that there should be a strengthened commitment to the management of the Potomac River to maintain the ecological health of the river.** The Potomac is the main source of drinking water for the Washington metropolitan region. It is highly probable that the present low flow regime managed by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin will need to be altered in the future to protect the ecology of the river. The ICPRB is coordinating research to identify indicator and impacted species

Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC)
c/o Department of Planning and Zoning
Planning Division
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 730
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-5509
Phone 703-324-1380 TTY: 711
Fax 703-324-3056
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eqac/

during drought/low flow. In the event of a prolonged low flow period, variable flows may be necessary to protect the ecology of the river. Ultimately, a healthy river should result in a better drinking water supply.

While EQAC does not object to the adoption of the Northern Virginia Regional Water Supply Plan as proposed, we urge the Board to endorse the two recommendations outlined above and to communicate these recommendations to Fairfax Water, ICPRB, NVRC and county staff.

SMK:nhk

cc: Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive
David J. Molchany, Deputy County Executive
James W. Patteson, Director, DPWES
Traci Kammer Goldberg, Manager, Planning, Fairfax Water
Normand Goulet, Senior Environmental Planner, Northern Virginia Regional Commission
EQAC file, February 2012