County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2015

TO: Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: Follow-up to January 22, 2015 memorandum on the county's fall cankerworm spray program

EQAC is writing this memorandum because a representative of the coalition of organizations opposing the fall cankerworm spraying program has expressed concern to us that our January 22, 2015 memorandum to you regarding the fall cankerworm spray program has presented the coalition's position inaccurately. We are writing to clarify the coalition's position. This matter was discussed at EQAC's meeting on March 11, 2015, and, by a unanimous vote of members present at that meeting, EQAC approved this follow-up transmittal to you.

Specifically, in an e-mail dated February 17, 2015, Kathryn Wychulis took issue with the following language in our January 22 memorandum: *"Both County staff and representatives of the coalition of organizations agreed that urban trees are more susceptible to being overstressed by cankerworms because trees in the urban forest face stresses that are worse than the stresses found in the natural environment."* She stated that this is not an accurate representation of the position taken by the coalition.

The EQAC memorandum built upon statements made by county staff and coalition representatives at EQAC's December 10, 2014 meeting. Because of the concern raised by Ms. Wychulis, we reviewed the recording of the discussion in order to determine if we had inaccurately represented statements from coalition members. County staff was clear in its presentation that urban trees face more stress than trees in other areas; there are several reasons for this increased stress, including a relative lack of diversity of native plants in the understory (there is often competition from non-native species), soil compaction and availability of water. The presentation from representatives of the coalition referenced a study from North Carolina State University that indicated that there are higher populations of fall cankerworm in urban areas as compared to more natural areas; it was suggested that the relative lack of diversity of native plants in urban areas may explain this difference. Also both county staff and coalition representatives noted that providing chickadee nesting boxes could be used to help control cankerworm populations and that this could be explored as a control strategy. However, while statements made by the coalition members agree with observations of county staff that led

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 703-653-9447
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eqac/

county staff to conclude that urban trees face stresses that make them more susceptible to the fall cankerworm, the coalition members did not draw such a conclusion, and therefore Ms. Wychulis's concern about how we represented the coalition's position is understood. We appreciate the coalition's clarification.

Despite this misunderstanding, EQAC has not changed its conclusion.

We apologize for any confusion about the coalition's positions that was caused by our January 22, 2015 memorandum.

cc: Edward L. Long, Jr., County Executive
David J. Molchany, Deputy County Executive
James W. Patteson, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
Keith Cline, Director, Urban Forest Management Division, DPWES
Troy Shaw, Chief, Forest Pest Management Branch, DPWES
Katherine Wychulis, Esq.
Ashley Kennedy
EQAC file, January 2015