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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX

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JEFFREY C. MCKAY
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BOARD MATTER

Supervisor McKay

October 5, 2009

Madam Chairman—There has been concern in the County about the activities of certain unscrupulous tree workers. Fairfax County police have responded to numerous complaints of exorbitant fees, poor or unnecessary work and deceptive practices, particularly affecting seniors or other vulnerable populations. The complaints on this issue originated in the Mt. Vernon area of the County.

The regulation of certain trades is typically a state responsibility, and not one delegated to localities – the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) licenses qualified individuals and businesses and enforces standards of professional conduct. During the September 16, 2009, meeting of the Legislative Committee, a two pronged strategy to deal with this issue was recommended.

First, the Legislative Committee recommended an enhanced County consumer awareness effort by the Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection, educating residents about how to protect themselves against these types of fraudulent activities. This campaign will include targeted outreach to seniors and other vulnerable populations, as well as information about how residents can contact the office of the County arborist if they have concerns about the legitimacy of tree work being performed. The campaign will also highlight DPOR's Hotline for Older Virginians, which focuses special efforts on fraud and discrimination against senior citizens, who are often potential targets for unscrupulous business practices.

Second, the Legislative Committee recommended sending a letter from the Chairman to the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, requesting a review of this issue for possible state regulation, copying the letter to the senators and delegates in the area of the County most affected by this problem.

Therefore, I move that the Board endorse the attached letter from the Chairman to the Director of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, requesting a

review of this issue. This letter will be copied to the senators and delegates in the area of the County most affected by this problem.