Response to Questions on the FY 2012 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Cook

Question: What is the status of the Integrated Pest Management Program for FY 2012 including the recommended tax rate? What are the options for changing or temporarily eliminating the tax rate?

Response: For FY 2012, Fund 116, the Integrated Pest Management Program is projected to be appropriately funded with the recommended tax rate held steady at $0.0010 per $100 of assessed value. The Integrated Pest Management Program includes both the Disease Carrying Insects Program (DCIP) as well as the Forest Pest Program (FPP). Since FY 2001, the Board of Supervisors-approved tax rate for the Integrated Pest Management Program has been $0.0010 per $100 of assessed value. At the current rate, budgeted expenditures exceed budgeted revenues in FY 2012 by approximately $1.2 million and accumulated ending balance is used for the difference. For FY 2012 the budgeted ending balance is $631,558.

Program expenditures are based on the prevalence of insect pests and the risk of disease transmission to humans and/or area tree cover. To address anticipated needs in FY 2012, the DCIP will be expanding activities related to ticks and tick borne diseases. The total number of reported Lyme disease cases has increased by more than 600 percent across Virginia over the last 10 years. The rate of disease seen in Fairfax County for 2009 was 24.8 cases per 100,000, which is significantly higher than the statewide rate of 11.7 cases per 100,000. The increasing prevalence of Lyme disease cases will require additional program activities, including more research, field-based non-merit staff and laboratory expenditures. The FPP has also recently included additional imported exotic plant pests in the suppression program recently approved by the Board of Supervisors.

The following options exist for changing or temporarily eliminating the IPM tax rate: 1) leave the tax rate the same; 2) modify the frequency in which the tax is levied (e.g., levy the tax biennially instead of annually); 3) reduce the tax rate for one year by increments of $0.0001 per $100 of assessed value; or 4) eliminate the tax levy. In FY 2012, for each reduction of $0.0001 per $100 of assessed value in the tax rate for the IPM program, revenues are projected to decrease by $190,000; tax savings for County residents would equal approximately $0.48 per household (or approximately $4.80 per household if the entire $0.0010 per $100 of assessed value tax rate is eliminated). However, any reduction in revenue runs the risk of leaving the IPM program without sufficient funds to address anticipated additional needs mentioned above, as well as address an event that occurs that may require the commitment of significant resources (such as weather conditions impacting mosquito populations).