

Response to Questions on the FY 2015 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: The Budget Consideration Item reduction “*Eliminate the Environmental Coordinator position*” has been requested. Provide a summary of the reduction including the impact it would have.

Response: The FY 2015 budget includes an amount of \$135,843 in personnel services and an estimated \$57,326 in fringe benefits for a total of \$193,169 to support the Environmental Coordinator position within the County Executive Office’s budget. This position was originally approved as part of the *FY 1998 Third Quarter Review*. Under the general direction of the Deputy County Executive, the Environmental Coordinator serves as the County’s expert and catalyst for the implementation of cross-organizational actions, program policy, initiatives and efforts that directly support the Board of Supervisors’ vision, goals and policies related to Environmental Stewardship, Sustainability and Energy. The Environmental Coordinator briefs and advises the Board of Supervisors, the County Executive, and Deputy County Executive on new regulations, provides analysis on the scope and impact of these regulations and provides expert counsel on how they can be implemented within the County to support the County’s environmental and energy and other related strategic initiatives. This position provides technical direction and oversight to County agencies to ensure compliance and continuity of operations and alignment with federal and state mandates, laws, regulations and policies. Using a team-based approach, the coordinator position is responsible for supervising technical, special assignment and clerical staff, as required, to initiate and coordinate the development and implementation of cross-organizational strategic and tactical environmental programs and policy for the county on major issues such as water supply planning, storm water, air quality, energy efficiency and conservation, ecological and natural resources and climate change. The Coordinator serves as the primary point of contact to represent the county on all regional and state air quality, water supply, energy and climate change matters and efforts and acts to advocate Board-adopted policy to the business community, environmental organizations and county residents. In addition the Coordinator initiates legislative proposals and negotiates with state counterparts/regulators and representatives from the development industry, concerned citizen groups and Board of Supervisor members on proposed statewide environmental and natural resource protection legislation.

The Environmental Coordinator supports and carries out the policies and goals in the Board’s Environmental Agenda and other related documents that contain Board-adopted environmental policy and administers the Environmental Improvement Program to include the Fairfax County Sustainability Initiatives publication and the projects funding process.

This position ensures coordination and collaboration among County departments, businesses and residents, which is critical to achieving operational and programmatic continuity, efficiency and sustainability. Stronger alignment among County agencies, the business community, environmental organizations, commissions and councils and county residents will streamline resources, spur creativity and efficacy and institutionalize sustainability principles.

The Environmental Coordinator provides staff support to the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Committee, the Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC), the County's Environmental Coordinating Committee, the County's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Coordinating Committee and works closely with the Planning Commission's Environment Committee. This position must work closely with and gain the trust of both County agencies, as well as other stakeholders, including County businesses and residents. The Environmental Coordinator operates at a very high level, with a broad range of complexity, impact, and level of responsibility assigned. Prior to the creation of this position, County agencies conducted their environmental and energy efforts largely without coordination and collaboration across departmental and project "silos", which was inefficient.