



AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA

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April 15, 2021

The Honorable Jeff McKay, Chairman  
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
12000 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, VA 22035

Re: URGENT, Schedule for Test Drilling at I-95 Lorton Landfill

Dear Chairman McKay:

Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (ASNV) urges the Board of Supervisors to take immediate action to prevent test drilling at the I-95 Lorton landfill from disrupting nesting birds and breeding and nesting wildlife. ASNV is a 4,500-member chapter of National Audubon Society whose mission is to protect and conserve avian wildlife for the benefit of people and the environment.

We understand that on March 23, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the interim agreement and right-of-entry agreement with Alpine-X LL for the Fairfax Peak development (ski resort complex) proposed for the I-95 Lorton landfill. The board matter (Action 6) included in the Board of Supervisors' meeting packet indicates that the amendment "would allow for test drilling as part of the diligence work to potentially reach into the landfill subgrade and/or bedrock," which would not otherwise have been allowed under the existing agreement does not allow this type of drilling. Alpine-X proposed "eight (8) cone penetrometer tests (CPT) and four (4) standard penetration tests (SPT) at various locations at the landfill, which will extend up to 15 feet below the current bottom of the landfill waste at two (2) locations." The amendment also allowed for "additional drilling, subject to additional provisions that may be deemed necessary to protect the County's interests."

ASNV is concerned that those tests were approved without coordination with any comprehensive biological survey of the plant and animal life present in all seasons at these test drilling sites and the entire site under consideration for the ski slope complex. Best practices for work of this kind or any activity that will disturb natural habitat is to ensure that the work avoids nesting birds. We urge you to impose appropriate seasonal limitations on the work to prohibit test drilling during breeding and nesting season, now underway, for birds, reptiles, mammals and other wildlife. Such limitations are common in many federal and state permits.

ASNV urges Fairfax County to make public the following information on an expedited basis before any drilling at the site begins:

- Any biological surveys of the plant and animal life present at the test drilling sites and the proposed area for construction
- The criteria used to approve proposed boring locations prior to drilling, including what is meant by protecting “the County’s interests”
- Whether the “County’s interests” include protecting natural resources at the property
- Any applicable notices to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Once the developer proceeds with test drilling, ASNV urges Fairfax County promptly to make public the following information: documentation of all disturbances to habitat and wildlife caused by this activity, including the presence of humans and machines and their noise, and mitigation employed for those disturbances, if any.

In light of the many potential environmental impacts of this massive, proposed development, ASNV believes that the county and the public should have very thorough and current information in considering it in the various steps and before making decisions of such great consequence.

We look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your response. Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,



Tom Blackburn  
President

cc: The Honorable Dan Storck, Supervisor, Mount Vernon District  
David K. Paylor, Director, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

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April 27, 2021

Mr. Tom Blackburn  
Audubon Society of Northern Virginia  
11100 Wildlife Center Drive, Suite 100  
Reston, VA 20190

Dear Mr. Blackburn:

Thank you for your letter regarding the geotechnical evaluation proposed at the I-95 Landfill Complex in Lorton, VA as part of the Fairfax Peak project development. Your letter was forwarded to the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP) for a response.

We applaud your efforts to protect natural habitat and wildlife in our community. To help address your concerns, we are providing information on the proposed scope of work, geotechnical work locations, and existing site conditions. We have also provided information on the review and approval process and the county's interests at the site.

The proposed geotechnical work plan includes using two different types of boring vehicles. The vehicles are designed to limit impacts to the site area. One vehicle has tracks and the other is a modified flatbed truck. Given the actual probe/boring hole diameters are small (1" to 8") and there will not be excavation, the impacts of the vehicles and geotechnical evaluation are expected to be minimal. Access to the boring locations will be made via established bench roads.

The I-95 Landfill Complex is comprised of a closed, capped municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill and a modern, active ash landfill. The Fairfax Peak project is proposed to be situated on top of the capped MSW landfill portion of the facility (Figure 1). The MSW landfill was closed in 1995 and the area within the proposed project location was capped in 2008. Over the years of operation of the facility (1973 to 1995), phases were closed and capped based on reaching capacity. The landfill cover system (cap) consists of a clay and/or synthetic liner (depending on the era the area was capped), a subsurface drainage layer, and an earthen top layer with vegetative cover. The vegetative cover is predominantly a mix of tall fescue, rye, and Chinese lespedeza (Figure 2). These cover crops were used historically because of their ability to quickly stabilize areas on slopes. Over time, the vegetative layer of the cap has been impacted by other, non-native, invasive herbaceous plants.

The proposed project area has routine and non-routine activities that precludes it from being utilized as natural habitat. The activities are required as part of Solid Waste Landfill Permit 103 and site operations manual to ensure proper management and environmental protection at the site.

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**Department of Public Works and Environmental Services**  
**Solid Waste Management Program**

12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 458  
Fairfax, Virginia 22035

Phone: 703-324-5230, TTY: 711, Fax: 703-324-3950

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes)



Routine activities include:

1. Landfill Gas Monitoring
  - a. Landfill Gas Collection System- There are series of landfill gas collection wells that are accessed and monitored every month. County staff use 4X4 vehicles and equipment to monitor and operate the gas collection system.
  - b. Surface Emissions Monitoring- County Staff and/or consultants conduct routine surface emissions monitoring to ensure the cap is not releasing landfill gases into the air. 4X4 vehicles and equipment are used to conduct this monitoring via transects across the property.  
The monitoring also ensures that any penetrations to the cap are identified and addressed as needed.
2. Landfill Cap Inspection/Vegetation Management
  - a. County staff utilize large tractors and brush hogs to mow the grass cover of the facility to allow for inspection and to prevent woody vegetative growth, which may damage the cap.  
Mowing/brush hogging occurs routinely during the growing season and prohibits the establishment of natural habitat. The maintenance of the vegetative cover system at the site is necessary for permit and environmental compliance (Figures 3 and 4)

Non-routine activities include:

1. Cap Maintenance Projects, Earthwork projects are required if issues of settlement and/or surface emissions are identified during inspection. These projects require active construction, including but not limited to:
  - a. Addition of earthen fill to maintain contours and proper stormwater drainage.
  - b. Repairs to penetrations to prevent surface emissions monitoring (penetrations include landfill gas wells that come up through the cap).
  - c. Addition of earthen fill and vegetative stabilization to repair erosion and denuded areas.
2. Transportation of Materials
  - a. Heavy equipment (e.g.: dump trucks and bull dozers) are used to transport and handle materials brought to the facility or that is generated at our County facilities, primarily dredge from stormwater basins. Dredge material is removed per our VPDES stormwater permit to ensure proper functionality of our basins around the facility. Bench roads that traverse the project area are used to transport this material.

These ongoing activities limit establishment of natural habitat for wildlife, although providing and protecting wildlife habitat is an important part of our facility and site operations. From 2016 through 2019 the SWMP planted approximately six acres of meadow habitat at the base of our

Mr. Tom Blackburn  
Geotechnical Evaluation at I-95 Landfill  
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landfill slopes (see map for location). Potential impacts to the meadow habitats from the proposed geotechnical work are prohibited.

In evaluating and approving the geotechnical evaluation work plan for the project the county conducted the following actions:

1. Review and Approval of Geotechnical Work Plan (Means & Methods, Locations, etc.)
  - a. SWMP review
  - b. Third party review by Environmental Consultant
  - c. Legal review by Office of County Attorney
  - d. Legal review by Outside Counsel
  - e. DEQ coordination and review

During the activity, SWMP staff will be onsite as observers to ensure no damage occurs to county interests. County interests at the facility include environmental infrastructure including but not limited to:

1. Landfill Cover System (Cap)
2. Landfill Gas Collection System
3. Leachate Collection System
4. Bench Access Roads
5. Mills Branch Culvert
6. Meadow Areas

Given the existing conditions and thorough review that has occurred, SWMP has determined that the proposed geotechnical evaluation will have minimal impact to the cover system and general surface condition at the site.

In an effort to address concerns the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia may have; I would like to offer you the opportunity to tour the project site area. Please let me know if you would like to visit the site and we can determine an appropriate date and time to do so.

Sincerely,  


Eric Forbes  
Director of Engineering and Environmental Compliance  
Solid Waste Management Program

Cc: Honorable Jeff McKay, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
Honorable Dan Storck, Supervisor, Mount Vernon District



14	Grass seed- (50 pound )I-95 location mix included Kentucky 31 Tall Rescue - 67.53%; Foxtail Millet - 10.89%; Annual Ryegrass - 9.98%; White Clover - 5%; Hulled Serecia Lespedeza - 4.91%; Other crop seed - 88%; inert matter - .79%; Weed seed - <.02%	Bag	\$ 60.00	\$ 61.50	Chesapeake Valley Seed, Inc.
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Figure 2 Seed Mix Historically Used at Facility (Amended in 2018 to remove Serecia Lespedeza)



Figure 3 Mowing Activity and Hay Bales



Figure 4 Hay Farming Activity