



County of Fairfax, Virginia

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

May 10, 2023

Beatra Wilson, Assistant Director
UCF / State & Private Forestry
USDA Forest Service
201 14th Street SW
Washington, DC 20250
RE: USDA-FS-2023-UCF-IRA-01

Dear Ms. Wilson:

The Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) supports Fairfax County's grant application to plant and maintain street trees, provide invasive species management, forest management, and afforestation/reforestation in the most vulnerable communities. This work is to be undertaken with community engagement in the areas where this work is targeted. Their grant proposal includes the creation and maintenance of Green Jobs through the incorporation of entry level positions with a path towards professional certifications such as Virginia Registered Pest Control Technician or International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Tree Worker.

The grant proposal will enable the County to undertake critical urban forest management and tree planting in vulnerable areas of the County that are experiencing heat island and flooding impacts due to climate change. EQAC recognizes the importance of urban forest management as a critical component of climate change resilience. Additionally, the County is prioritizing invasive species management as a critical component to preserving our urban forests and ecosystem.

We appreciate the County will employ its racial and social equity policy, One Fairfax, as a key component of the grant to address environmental justice issues and expand equitable access to tree canopy and urban forests. In support of the Justice40 initiative, the County will prioritize areas of highest vulnerability and recognize the many environmental and social benefits that these natural-based systems will bring to these communities. Also, should the grant be awarded, will support the President's April Executive Order to Revitalize our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for all.

EQAC thanks you for your consideration of Fairfax County's grant proposal and we support awarding Fairfax County funding for this proposal.

Sincerely,

Larry J. Zaragoza, DEnv, Chair
Environmental Quality Advisory Council