


DATE: xxxxxx

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Larry J Zaragoza, DEnv, Chair 
Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC)

SUBJECT: FY2025 County Budget Recommendations

This memorandum provides EQAC's recommendations on the County Executive's recommendations for the FY2025 proposed budget. We offer the following recommendations:

- 1. Climate Funding:** While CECAP was published in 2021, the resources needed to fully fund implementation for the county's three climate plans including the Operational Energy Strategy (OES), the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and Resilient Fairfax has not been established. EQAC recognizes the progress being made in county operations through implementation of the Sustainable Development Policy and significant investments in Energy Efficient Retrofits, Solar and EV infrastructure at county facilities that have been primarily funded through the carryover budget process. EQAC recommends that dedicated funding be allocated to implement programs that support both county operation and community facing programs. Many of the community facing programs are in an early, pilot phase and efforts are underway to develop these pilots into sustainable programs. EQAC recommends that the county provide information on the potential greenhouse gas emissions reductions that can be achieved by different programs on the county climate dashboard as soon as possible along with estimate of the cost of implementation. EQAC urges the county to place a priority on funding those projects that will have the greatest benefits in helping to meet the county's greenhouse gas emissions goals and build resilience to climate change.
- 2. Animal Services Consolidation:** The consolidation of Animal Protection Police Officers (APPO) program under the Department of Animal Sheltering (DAS) lacks sufficient justification and has not conducted adequate outreach with the community to make an informed decision on the costs and benefits of such a move from the status quo. The current partnership of the APPO and Wildlife Biologist program under the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) has received praise from state agencies, stakeholders, and community members for its effectiveness to enforce state and local wildlife regulations and policies. Consolidating with the DAS jeopardizes the success of the programs and more importantly the mission of the wildlife management programs as described in the Board of Supervisor's Environmental Vision. It is not clear how this reorganization would support One Fairfax, result in better outcomes for wildlife in the county, maintain safety for residents, reduce the budget, or provide greater efficiency.
- 3. Parks:** EQAC appreciates the funding for the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA). EQAC appreciates the Board's stable funding for the Park Authority. In the face of a tough budget year, EQAC appreciates the commitment to One Fairfax through full annual

funding of a Mobile Nature Center, support of the county's Zero Waste initiative through funding of a pilot program (in part through the General Fund), and funding for natural resources including continued investments in forestry, bamboo removal, and restoration. EQAC further appreciates an increase in funding for the Invasive Management Area program through the Environmental and Energy Program. While EQAC continues to advocate for a more sustainable funding model for the Park Authority, the Board's support this year of FCPA initiatives is greatly appreciated.

4. Stormwater: Given that stormwater needs exceed the budget, EQAC continues to recommend a quarter penny increase in the stormwater rate, which would increase the current rate to 0.035 per \$100 of assessed value. The advertised stormwater rate will not meet needs, which include maintaining the existing stormwater infrastructure, flood control, stream restoration and possibly Lake Accotink. Historically, EQAC had recognized the need for additional funding to support stormwater and recommended that a quarter penny be added to the stormwater tax annually until the stormwater needs are met. However, the quarter penny has not been included in the budget for several years.
5. Incremental funding: The advertised rate increases for solid waste collection and leaf collection does not meet the expected need. Thus, the cost of these programs is higher than the proposed funding.
 - a. Solid Waste Collection: In order to fully fund the cost of the program, EQAC recommends that the Board of Supervisors advertise an annual waste collection fee of \$578/yr for each household.
 - b. Leaf Pile Collection: To fully fund the cost of the program, EQAC recommends an annual leaf collection fee of 0.024 per \$100 of assessed value. Moreover, given the high carbon footprint associated with the leaf collection program, the fact that county services provide residents with the option of bagging their leaves and that the vast majority of county residents do not have curbside leaf pile collection, EQAC supports at least encouraging residents to compost leaves.

We also support the County Executive's proposed increase in the wastewater treatment rate, which is needed to maintain these critical facilities.

We thank you for your consideration of these recommendations and welcome any questions.

cc: Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive
John Morrill, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)
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