



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 13, 2024

TO: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS)

FROM: Larry Zaragoza, DEnv, Chair *Larry Zaragoza*
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. Stormwater: EQAC recommends that the BOS increase the advertised stormwater tax by a quarter penny to 0.035 per \$100 of assessed value. The existing funding is insufficient for the existing program, such as 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. However, the quarter penny has not been included in the budget for several years.
2. Incremental funding: EQAC understands that the recommended funding for solid waste collection is intended to be an incremental increase that is expected to be increased again in the following fiscal year. This approach has risks because the real cost of the program is higher than the proposed funding.
 - a. Solid Waste Collection: EQAC recommends that the Board of Supervisors advertise an annual waste collection fee of \$578/yr for each household.
 - b. Leaf Collection: EQAC recommends that the Board of Supervisors advertise 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, EQAC supports eliminating this program and encouraging residents to compost leaves.
3. 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 recognize the progress

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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.

4. **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 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.
5. **Parks:** EQAC appreciates the funding for the Park Authority.

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

cc: Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive
John Morrill, Acting Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)
Christopher Herrington, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES)
Tracy Strunk, Director, Department of Planning and Development, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
Bill Hicks, Director, Land Development Services Land Development Services (LDS)
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