



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 18, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Stella Koch, Chairman
Environmental Quality Advisory Council

SUBJECT: October 1, 2020 Joint Environmental Task Force Report

Dear Board of Supervisors:

The Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) reviewed the October 1, 2020 Joint Environmental Task Force (JET) Final Report. The council is excited to see some actionable and tangible recommendations for the county to implement. We understand that this report has now been distributed to staff to move forward with an action plan.

However, as the county looks to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change, we must do so in a way that evaluates and mitigates impacts to our natural resources. In fact, the JET's original mission and organization were comprehensive and included a land use component. In early meetings beginning in September 2019, the JET engaged in robust and productive discussions across the original set of focus areas. However, impacts on JET meetings due to COVID-19 health crisis resulted in a streamlining of the JET's focus and four focus areas were chosen. The topic of natural resources was hence largely left out of future discussions and the resulting recommendations.

EQAC recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to include natural resources as a focus area, highlighting their importance and ensuring that impacts on natural resources be considered as the JET action plan progresses forward. While the JET's recommendations will guide a small percentage of land use in the county, including natural resources as a focus area establishes the preservation of natural resources on county and school properties as a priority, ensures the benefits of progress such as the Natural Landscape Plan Amendment are realized, and serves as a teaching tool our kids as they envision a sustainable future. The county must be a leader in this area.

As the county aggressively pursues its greenhouse reduction goals, EQAC wishes to avoid tradeoffs like almost occurred with the Georgetown solar project¹ where hundreds of acres of trees were on the chopping block in exchange for a solar farm. It is important to establish a

¹ <https://wamu.org/story/19/08/29/georgetown-solar-farm-blocked-over-concerns-about-forest-loss/>

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natural resources priority area for the implementation of the JET recommendations. Doing so also sets an example to follow as the county progresses with other initiatives, such as the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP).

EQAC is supportive of the county moving forward on these issues and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
Stella Koch
EQAC Chairwoman

cc: Karl Frisch, Fairfax County Public School, Board Member
Elaine Tholen, Fairfax County Public School, Board Member