



The Fairfax County Tree Commission
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 518
Fairfax, Virginia 22035
703.324.1770

April 15, 2021

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 500
Fairfax, VA 22035

Sent via email to: ClerktotheBOS@fairfaxcounty.gov

RE: Mature Trees and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) 2021 proposed amendments to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act

Dear Board of Supervisors:

Virginia DEQ is proposing amendments (subsequent to 2020 approved legislation) to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act § 62.1-44.15:72 that, if approved, will require Fairfax County to change its local Chesapeake Bay Ordinance.

The Fairfax County Tree Commission supports County staff's recommendation to submit public comments (due May 3, 2021) regarding the need for clarity in the definition of "mature tree" and what "to the maximum extent practicable" means in practice, as was described in their presentation to the Land Use Committee on March 16, 2021. We note that, as proposed, the phrase "to the maximum extent practicable" is used differently in 9VAC25-830-130. General performance criteria and 9VAC25-830-140. Development criteria for Resource Protection Areas and clarifying what "to the maximum extent practicable" means in each case is important. We further recommend that Fairfax County's Urban Forest Management staff be included in any State or local level working group involved in revising our local Chesapeake Bay Ordinance.

Mature trees in Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) are important to maintaining the stability of our streams by holding soils, thus preventing erosion and absorbing and filtering stormwater. They also remove pollutants from the air and provide important habitat for our native wildlife. Mature trees also protect us from the impacts of climate change and are an important under-utilized carbon sequestration tool removing carbon from the air. As such the preservation and protection of mature trees, especially in RPAs, should be a priority.

Thank you for your support of our Urban Forest.

Sincerely,

Catherine C. Ledec
Chairman

cc: Jerry Stonefield, Fairfax County Land Development Services
John Friedman, Fairfax County Land Development Services