

Federation Resolution on

Supporting the Flood Plain and Chesapeake Bay Ordinances

For Membership vote on December 20, 2018

WHEREAS, Fairfax County is a leader in the protection and restoration of our local streams initiated by the Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) policy that set aside stream valley buffers for protection, ultimately improving the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay;

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Floodplain Ordinance is “to protect against loss of life, health, or property from flood or other dangers”;

WHEREAS, a proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment intends to develop housing in the 100-year floodplain, Environment Quality Corridor (EQC) and Resource Protection Area (RPA);

WHEREAS, it is expected that the mid-Atlantic region will experience more intense storms in the future due to climate change;

WHEREAS, Fairfax County is one of just two (2) jurisdictions in Virginia with a FEMA rating entitling Fairfax County residents to a discount on flood insurance;

WHEREAS, the FEMA rating is based on the strength and vigorous enforcement of the Floodplain Ordinance;

WHEREAS, implementation of Fairfax County watershed improvement plans will involve hundreds of millions of dollars of expenditures of monies collected from the Stormwater Utility fee that is paid by every property owner in Fairfax.

WHEREAS, land use decisions that allow for new residential lots within the Environment Quality Corridor (EQC), Resource Protection Area (RPA) and Floodplain (FP) without satisfying Comprehensive Plan Policy Guidance criteria jeopardize present stream protection will likely increase costs for future protection and restoration.

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
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WHEREAS, there are other sites in the county with similar levels of degradation, this proposed Comprehensive Plan change has the capacity to create a precedent that would undermine EQC policy that has been in place since the mid-1970s;

WHEREAS, the EQC Policy has resulted in a significant number of acres of stream valley land being protected and remaining in a natural vegetated buffer state, providing ecosystem services in support of improved public health;

WHEREAS, the EQC guidance further states that disturbances should only be supported in “extraordinary circumstances” and result in a clear and substantial net environmental benefit;

WHEREAS, in 1993 the County adopted a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance in which lands adjacent to the perennial portion (as delineated by USGS maps) of streams were designated as Resource Protection Areas (RPAs);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Fairfax Federation of Citizens Associations urges the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to deny any amendments to the comprehensive plan which potentially creates a county-wide precedent with significant adverse impact to local environmental and stream protections reversing policies that have been successful at reducing risks that County residents may lose valuable flood insurance discounts; and
2. The Fairfax County Federation of Citizen Associations fully supports the August 2018 position of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council urging the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to deny a proposed change to the Comprehensive Plan.¹

¹ <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-zoning/sites/planning-zoning/files/Assets/documents/EQAC/Resolutions%20and%20Positions/2018/2018%2C%20August--EQAC%20position%20on%20proposed%20Plan%20Amendment%20PA%202018-IV-MV2.pdf>