

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Legislative Program Issues Evaluation Form

<u>Issue ID:</u> 17C02-Stormwater Controls
<u>Date Submitted to Legislative Committee:</u> 17October 2016
<u>Issue:</u> Local Governments need the authority to require developers to prove that new developments will not impair or degrade Waters of the State.
<u>Background:</u> The rapid development in Fairfax County has had a major impact on the groundwater and surface water problems we face today as a result, most of the streams in Fairfax County are designated as impaired and most of the County has already been built up. The comprehensive plan process is inadequate for improving the water quality of our streams. The County needs the authority to require new projects do no further damage to impaired waters of the State. .
<u>Existing Conditions/Impacts:</u> The Comprehensive planning process focuses on individual projects rather than looking holistically at impaired streams. Watershed management plans are focusing on improving existing remediating major stream impairments but do not look at new projects. County ordinances are state-of-the-art but will not be sufficient to address problems in impaired watersheds. New development and redevelopment activities often offer opportunities to design and implement modern, permanent site and building features that may reduce or eliminate stormwater pollution throughout the lifetime of a facility or development. On the other hand, construction activities associated with development can contribute significant amounts of pollutants if best management practices (BMPs) are not properly executed. Prior to the recent legislation prohibiting the use of proffers, the Board of Supervisors could use the proffer process to ensure better stormwater controls.
<u>Preferred Position:</u> Local communities, (Counties and Cities) need authority to require that developers demonstrate that new projects will not increase the stormwater runoff water quality or volume from their property. We call on elected officials to give local Governments authority to use the proffers to require stormwater controls on new developments or redevelopments and the Board of Supervisors needs to support construction projects that observe local zoning laws, re-purpose previous developments rather than develop open space, and make use of new technologies to reduce runoff, capture nitrogen and reduce water consumption – specifically focusing on Low Impact Development (LID) technologies. Infiltration and volume reduction is critical and should be a requirement for all projects.
<u>Benefits:</u> Allowing Counties and Cities to require developers demonstrate that new projects will not worsen the impaired status of waterways will decrease the need for County funds for remediation of stormwater impairments. Encouraging/requiring LID projects would create smaller overall development footprints, reduce the amount of runoff generated and increase the amount of natural areas on a site, thereby reducing costs when compared to traditional stormwater management and flood control. Besides reducing the capital and other actual costs, using LID practices provide: improved aesthetics for communities, expanded recreational opportunities, increased property values due to the desirability of the lots and their proximity to open space, increased marketing potential and faster sales for residential and commercial properties, and reduced stream channel damage and pollutant loadings in downstream waters.
<u>Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations):</u> The many steam friends of organizations such as the Friends of Accotink Creek, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Tree stewards, Coalition for Smarter Growth.
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